SHAKESPEARE'S
CORIOLANUS

Edited by

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Formerly Head of the Department of Engl
Camp College, New Delh

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K. L. KAPUR, *M.*
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CONTENTS

PART I

(By Ramji Lall M.A.)

PART II

(By Ramji Lall M.A.)

PART III

(By K. L. Kapoor M.A.)

SHAKESPEARE'S

THE TRAGEDY OF CORIOLANUS

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

I. LIFE OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

No truly reliable or authentic biography of Shakespeare can be written because very little about the man has come down to us from genuine sources. The available facts about his life are based chiefly on guess-work and conjecture.

Early life. William Shakespeare was born on April 23, 1564, in the village of Stratford-on-Avon in the county of Warwickshire. His father John Shakespeare was a farmer's son who came to Stratford about 1531, and began to prosper as a trader in corn, wheat, leather and agricultural products. His mother Mary Arden was the daughter of a prosperous farmer, descended from an old family of mixed Anglo-Saxon and Norman blood. It is generally believed that neither the poet's mother nor his father could read or write.

Of Shakespeare's education little is known. For a few years he probably attended the Grammar School at Stratford where he picked up "small Latin and less Greek". His real teachers meanwhile were the men and women and natural influences which surrounded him. Stratford is a charming little village in the beautiful county of Warwickshire Near at hand were the forests of Arden, the old castles of Warwick and Kenilworth, and the old Roman camps and military roads, all of which appealed powerfully to the boy's active imagination. Every aspect of the natural beauty of this exquisite region is reflected in Shakespeare's poetry ; just as his characters reflect the nobility and the littleness, the gossip, vices, emotions, prejudices and traditions of the people about him. The nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*, for instance, is simply the reflection of some forgotten nurse with whom Shakespeare had talked by the wayside, one whose endless gossip and vulgarity could not hide a kind heart. Not only the gossip but also the dreams, the unconscious poetry that sleeps in the heart of the common people, appealed tremendously to Shakespeare's imagination and are reflected in his greatest plays. In the same way, his

education at the hands of Nature came from keeping his heart as well as his eyes wide open to the beauty of the world. Because he noted and remembered every significant thing in the changing scenery of earth and sky, no other writer has ever approached him in the perfect natural setting of his characters.

When Shakespeare had attained the age of 14, his father lost his little property and fell into debt. The boy probably left school to help and support the family of younger children. It is not exactly known what occupation he followed for the next eight years. From evidence found in his plays, it is maintained that he was a country school-master and a lawyer's clerk ; but if evidence of this kind be collected from his various plays, then Shakespeare will be found to have been a botanist, a courtier, a clown, a king, a woman, a Roman, etc. He was everything in his imagination, and it is impossible from a study of his scenes and characters to form a definite opinion about his early occupation.

In 1582, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, the daughter of a peasant family. She was eight years older than Shakespeare. From many mocking references to marriage made by the characters in Shakespeare's plays, and from the fact that he soon left his wife and family and went to London, it is generally alleged that the marriage was a hasty and unhappy one. But here again such internal evidence is untrustworthy. There are quite a number of references in his plays to the happy side of love and marriage, and on this ground we could as well say that Shakespeare's marriage was a happy one. And the fact that after his enormous success in London he retired to Stratford to live quietly with his wife and daughters, confirms this conclusion.

About the year 1587, Shakespeare went to London where he joined Burbage's company of actors. According to a tradition, his reason for leaving Stratford was that he had been caught stealing a deer from Sir Thomas Lucy's park and he fled to Stratford to escape the consequences. But it is not certain whether, at the time Shakespeare is said to have stolen a deer, there were any deer or a park at the place referred to. At any rate, it is unworthy to construct out of rumour the story of a great life which had no contemporary biographer.

Life in London. Of his life in London from 1587 to 1611, nothing definite is known. It was the period of his greatest literary activity. He entered into the stirring life of England's capital with the same perfect sympathy and understanding which he had shown among the simple folk of his native Warwickshire. He came to be known among his followers as "the gentle Shakespeare." Ben Jonson said of him, "I loved the man and do honour to his memory, on this side idolatry, as much as any. He was indeed honest and of an open and free nature". To judge from only three of his earliest plays (*Love's Labour's Lost*; *Comedy of Errors*; and *Two Gentlemen of Verona*), it would seem that in the first five years of his London life he had gained entrance to the society of gentlemen and scholars, and was ready by knowledge and observation as well as by genius to depict the whole stirring life of the English people in his plays. There is every reason to believe that his life in London, unlike that of the typical actor and playwright, was not wild and dissolute.

Apprenticeship and the experimental stage. Shakespeare's first work may well have been that of a general helper or an odd-job man about the theatre; but he soon became an actor. The records of the old London theatres show that in the next ten years he gained a prominent place. Within two years he was at work on plays, and his course was exactly like that of other playwrights of his time. He worked with other writers, and he revised old plays before writing his own and so gained a practical knowledge of his art. He soon broke away from this apprentice-work and then appeared, in quick succession *Love's Labour's Lost, Comedy of Errors, Two Gentlemen of Verona,* the English Chronicle plays (*Henry VI, Richard III, Richard II, King John*), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Romeo and Juliet*. The wide variety of these plays, as well as their frequent crudities, marks the first or experimental stage of Shakespeare's work. It is as if the author were trying the temper of his audience, for to please his audience was the ruling motive of Shakespeare.

Growing popularity. Shakespeare's poems, rather than these early dramatic attempts, mark the beginning of his success. *Venus and Adonis* became immensely popular in London. It was dedicated to the Earl of Southampton and brought from

him a large gift of money. This money Shakespeare invested shrewdly and soon became part-owner of the Globe and the Blackfriars theatres. At these theatres, his plays were presented by his own companies. His success and popularity grew enormously. Within a decade of his arrival in London, he had become one of the most famous actors and literary men in England.

The period of maturity. Following his experimental work, there came a series of great plays from his pen : *The Merchant of Venice, As You Like It, Twelfth Night, Julius Caesar, Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, King Lear, and Antony and Cleopatra.* It is believed that the great tragedies of this period point to personal misfortunes in the life of Shakespeare, but what these misfortunes were it is difficult to guess. It was probably this unknown sorrow which turned his thoughts back to his native village and caused a dissatisfaction with his work and profession. In 1597 he bought the finest house in Stratford and soon added a tract of farming land to complete his estate. His home visits became more and more frequent till, about the year 1611, he left London and settled permanently at Stratford-on Avon.

Though still in the prime of life, Shakespeare gave up his dramatic work to live the comfortable life of a country gentleman. Some of his later plays show a decline from the quality of his previous work. His last play was *The Tempest* based upon an actual ship-wreck. It is quite evident that Shakespeare thought little of success and had no idea that his dramas were the greatest that the world ever produced. He made no attempt to collect or publish his work. After a few years of quiet life at Stratford-on-Avon Shakespeare died on the anniversary of his birth, April 23, 1616. On his tombstone the following lines are inscribed :

Good friend for Jesus' sake forbear
To dig the dust enclosed here ;
Blest be the man that spares these stones,
And curst be he that moves my bones.

Thousands of people visit Shakespeare's tomb every year. His tomb has become almost a place of pilgrimage for his admirers.

II. SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

Shakespeare's poetic and dramatic career has been divided into four periods corresponding to the growth and experience of his life and mind. This division is as follows :

(1) **Period of early experimentation** (1588-93). To this period belong : *Titus Andronicus* ; *Henry VI* (three parts) ; *Love's Labour's Lost* ; *Comedy of Errors* ; *Two Gentlemen of Verona* ; *Richard III*, *Richard II*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. To this period belong also the twe poems : *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*. The work of this period is, as a whole, extremely slight in texture ; the treatment of life is superficial ; there is no depth of thought or characterisation ; and the art is evidently immature. The work is characterised by youthful exuberance of imagination, by extravagance of language and by a constant use of puns, conceits, and other affectations.

(2) **Period of the great comedies and chronicle plays** (1594-1600). The works of this period are : *King John*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Henry IV* (part I and part II), *Henry V*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like it*, and *Twelfth Night*. These plays show a rapid growth and development in the poet's genius. They reflect a deeper knowledge of human life and human nature ; the characterisation and the humour have become more penetrating ; thought has become more weighty ; rime has largely been abandoned for prose and for blank verse, and the blank verse itself has lost its stiffness.

(3) **Period of the great tragedies and of the sombre or bitter comedies** (1601-1607). To this period belong : *Julius Caesar* ; *Hamlet*, *All is Well that Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure* ; *Troilus and Cressida*; *Othello* ; *King Lear*; *Macbeth* ; *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus*, and *Timon of Athens*. This is a period of gloom and depression, and it marks the full maturity of his powers. His dramatic power, his intellectual power, and his power of expression are at their highest. This is the time of his supreme masterpieces. His attention is, however, occupied exclusively with the darker side of human experience. The sins and weaknesses of man form the theme of his plays ; the emphasis is laid on evil and the tone is either grave or fierce.

(4) **Period of the later comedies or dramatic romances** (1608-12). The plays of this period are : *Pericles*,

Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale, The Tempest, and the un-finished *Henry VIII*. During this period, the temper of Shakespeare has changed from bitter and gloomy to serene and peaceful. The heavy clouds have melted away from the sky. A tender and gracious tone prevails. The ground-work is still furnished by tragic passion, but the evil is no longer permitted to have its way. The evil is controlled and conquered by the good. At the same time, these plays show the decline of Shakespeare's dramatic powers. They are often careless in construction and unsatisfactory in characterisation, while there is a decline in style and versification also.

III. A BRIEF HISTORY OF ENGLISH DRAMA UP TO SHAKESPEARE

Miracle or mystery plays : The history of the English drama dates from the eleventh century. The earliest dramatic representation in England is believed to have been the performance of a Latin play in honour of St. Katherine, at Dunstable in 1110. By the time of Roman conquest (1066), a form of religious drama, originating from the rich symbolic ceremonial of the church had already established itself in France, and as a matter of course, it soon found its way into England. Its purpose was directly didactic or instructional : it was the work of priests who used it as the means of conveying the truths of their religion to the illiterate masses. To begin with, the Church had this drama completely under control ; performances were given inside the church buildings themselves ; the priests were the actors ; and Latin was the language employed. This form of drama was known as the *Miracle* or *Mystery* play. The material for mystery plays was drawn from the Bible and these mystery plays expanded the mysteries connected with religion. Miracles consisted of the stories of saints in whose honour they were acted. As the mystery or miracle play increased in popularity and on great occasions larger crowds came to witness the performances, it became necessary to remove the stage from the interior of the building to the porch. Later, it was taken from the porch into the churchyard and finally from the church premises altogether to the village green or the city street. Laymen at the same time began to take part in the performances, and soon they superseded the priests

entirely. Also, the vernacular tongue, first French, then English, took the place of Latin.

The four great cycles of mystery plays : This religious drama in England reached its height in the 14th century, from which time onwards at the festival of Corpus Christi, in early summer, miracle plays were represented in nearly all larger English towns in great connected sequences of cycles. These Corpus Christi plays were also known as "collective mysteries", and they exhibited the whole story of the fall of man and of man's redemption. Their performances were arranged by the trading guilds of different towns. Four of these cycles have come down to us complete : (1) The Chester Cycle of 25 plays. (2) The Coventry Cycle of 42 plays. (3) The Wakefield Cycle of 31 plays. (4) The New York Cycle of 48 plays. Each of these begins with the creation of the world and the fall of man, and after dealing with such prophetic themes as the Flood, the sacrifice of Isaac, and the exodus from Egypt, goes on to represent the last scenes in the life of Christ—the Crucifixion, the Resurrection and the Ascension and closes with the Last Judgment. In literary quality, these plays are of course crude but here and there they touch the note of pathos and the note of tragedy, while the occasional introduction of a comic element shows even more clearly the growth of a dramatic sense. These religious performances lasted well on into the 16th century and there is good reason to think that Shakespeare must have witnessed once at least those which, during his boyhood, were still being given at Coventry. (Hamlet's advice to the players not to "out-Herod Herod" recalls the declamatory and rhetorical style of the Herod of the old miracle plays).

Morality plays : The next stage in the history of English drama is the "*morality*" play. This, like the miracle play, was didactic in purpose ; but its characters, instead of being taken from the Bible or from the legends of saints, were personified abstractions. All kinds of mental and moral qualities appeared on the stage as characters in the play—Patience, Perseverance, Free will, the Five Senses, the Seven Deadly Sins, good and bad Angels, etc. Among such personifications there was generally a place for the Devil who had held a prominent position in the miracle plays. A later introduction of much importance was the so-called Vice, who was some humorous personification

of evil taken on the comic side. This was the recognised fun-maker of the piece. This character often scored a tremendous popular success by jumping on the Devil's back, sticking thorns into him, beating him with a stick and making him roar with pain. He is specially interesting as the direct forerunner of the clown of the Elizabethan stage.

The interlude : The "interlude" was a late product of the dramatic development of the morality play. The interlude was a short dramatic piece of a satiric rather than of a religious or ethical nature, and in tone and purpose far less serious than the morality proper. This form grew up early in the 16th century and is rather closely associated with the name of John Heywood (1497-1580), who for a time was court musician and general provider of entertainment to Henry VIII. His *Four P's*, a dialogue in which a Palmer, a Pardoner, a Pothecary and a Pedlar exchange racy stories, and finally enter into competition as to which of them can tell the biggest lie, is the most amusing specimen of its class. The interludes were often acted by household servants or retainers and are important as developing the custom of a nobleman of wealth having a band of more or less well-trained actors dependent on him. In the later part of Elizabeth's reign, when the drama proper was full-grown, we find theatrical companies calling themselves "the Earl of Leicester's servants", the "Queen's players", and so on.

The beginning of regular comedy and tragedy : These early experiments in play-writing are of great importance historically, because they did much to prepare the way for the regular drama. It was, however, under the direct influence of the renaissance (=the revival of learning) that English comedy and tragedy alike passed out of these preliminary phases of their development into forms of art Men went back to the classics for inspiration and example in the drama as in other fields of literary enterprise, though it was the work of the Latin, not of Greek play-wrights, that they took as their models. At first the comedies of Plautus and Terence, and the tragedies of Seneca were themselves acted at the universities, and on special occasions elsewhere. Then came Latin imitations, and in due course these were followed by attempts to fashion English plays upon the patterns of the originals. In such attempts English writers learned many valuable lessons in

the principles of dramatic construction and technique. The first real English comedy, *Roister Doister,* was written in 1550 by Nicholos Udall, headmaster of Eton, for performance by his school-boys. It has five acts in the Latin style and deals in an entertaining manner with the wooing of Dam Custance by the vainglorious hero, his various misadventures, and the pranks of Matthew Merrygreek, the jester. Though greatly indebted to Plautus and Terence it shows the influence of the older humours of the miracle plays and the moralities. The first real English tragedy, *Gorboduc,* reproduces the form and spirit of Senecan tragedy. It was written by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton in 1561 for representation before members of the Inner Temple at their Christmas festivities. This first English tragedy was the first Engl.sh play to use blank verse which had been introduced into English poetry only a few years before.

Shakespeare's predecessors : The quarter century or so which followed the production of *Gorboduc* was a period of vast experimentation in the English drama. There was a conflict between those who insisted on the classical tradition and those who wanted to cater to the strong national taste of the English public. In the end, the national taste won and just before Shakespeare began his career as a playwright the romantic form of drama (as distinguished from the classical type) was definitely established. The establishment of this romantic drama was the achievement of Shakespeare's immediate predecessors, a group of university men commonly known as the "university wits". They include John Lyly, Thomas Kyd, George Peele, Robert Greene, Christopher Marlowe, and Thomas Nash. Of these John Lyly (1544-1606) and Christopher Marlowe (1564-93) possess a special significance and they exerted a direct influence upon Shakespeare.

Lyly's dramatic work consists of eight cemedies of which the best are *Campaspe, Endymion,* and, *Gallanthea*. Their interest depends not on plot or characterisation but on language, wit, ingenuity, and grace of the dialogue. Lyly helped to give comedy an intellectual tone. In his skill in repartee, puns, conceits and all sorts of verbal fire-works, he anticipated Shakespeare, whose early comedies such as *Love's Labour's Lost* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* owe much to his example. In comedy, Lyly was undeniably Shakespeare's first master.

Marlowe's historical importance is even greater. A man of fiery imagination and immense powers, he lived a wild Bohemian life. While still young he was killed in a drunken fight. His *Tamburlaine the Great, Dr. Faustus*, and *The Jew of Malta*, despite their bombast and extravagance, fix the type of tragedy and chronicle play for his immediate successors. He used blank verse in these plays with great success. In fact, before Marlowe there was neither genuine blank verse nor a genuine tragedy in the English language. Marlowe created the modern tragic drama. After his arrival the way was prepared, and the paths were made straight for Shakespeare. Shakespeare's early blank verse is fashioned on Marlowe's. Shakespear's narrative poem *Venus and Adonis* is to some extent inspired by Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*. Shakespeare's *Richard III* and *Richard II* are clearly based on the model of chronicle play provided in Marlowe's *Edward II*. Even Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* owes something to Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*.

IV. SHAKESPEARE, A ROMANTIC PLAYWRIGHT

The establishment of romantic drama in England was the work of Shakespeare's immediate predecessors known as the university wits (Kyd, Lyly, Greene, Peele, Marlowe, etc.). Shakespeare's plays follow the example set by these men. In other words, he is a romantic dramatist as distinguished from the classical dramatists of ancient Greece and Rome.

Briefly speaking, the classical drama of antiquity was supposed to observe the following principles :

(1) It rigorously maintained a unity of subject and tone. As a result, it kept the spheres of tragedy and comedy entirely separate. A tragedy had to be a tragedy from first to last : it had to maintain the proper tragic pitch and no humorous episode was permitted in it. A comedy, on the other hand, had to be a comedy from first to last, and no tragic element was allowed to enter into its composition.

(2) There was a little or no dramatic action on the stage. The incidents composing the plot took place off the stage and were reported to the audience in dialogue.

(3) The three unities of time, place and action, controlled the writing of drama. The entire story of a play had to be

confined to a single day ; the scene of the entire play remained the same throughout ; the plot was to be one and no sub-plots or minor episodes were permitted.

The Elizabethan drama of Shakespeare and his immediate predecessors departed from all the above principles ;

(1) Romantic drama makes free use of variety in theme and tone, often mixing tragic and comic scenes in the same play.

(2) Romantic drama, again, is essentially a drama of action, nearly every incident of the play being exhibited on the stage. Romantic drama violates also the three unities. It allows the story to extend over months, and even years. It changes the scenes as often as necessary, sometimes from one town or country to another. It employs sub-plots and under-plots, besides the central theme.

V. SOME FACTS ABOUT THE ELIZABETHAN THEATRE

The Elizabethan theatres were primitive concerns, large wooden sheds, partly thatched with rushes, a flagstaff on the roof, and surrounded by a trench. They stood along the bank of the Thames and gave rise to a good deal of vexation to quiet citizens in the neighbourhood. Around these play-houses in the afternoons, the narrow winding streets were so crowded by noisy, frivolous groups of people that business suffered in the shops, processions and funerals were obstructed, and perpetual causes of complaint arose.

In spite of objections by the residents, and bitter criticism by the Puritans, theatres multiplied rapidly. In 1633 there were nineteen permanent theatres in London which for a town of 30,000 inhabitants sufficiently indicates the keen interest taken in the drama.

The private theatres were designed on the model of the Guild Halls ; the public theatres on the model of the Inn Yard. The private theatres were more luxurious, being fully roofed and seated. In the public theatres, on the other hand, the auditorium, as in ancient Greece, was open to the sky, only the stage being roofed. Thus the pleasure of seeing the play in bad weather was marred.

There were no tickets. An amount of five pence in

modern reckoning admitted a customer to standing room in the yard. Rich spectators watched the performances from boxes on each side of the stage, paying about 12 shillings for the privilege of a seat. In an upper box was the orchestra of the Globe theatre, the largest in London, composed of ten performers with different instruments.

The fashionable part of the house was on the stage itself. There sat the royal patrons of the theatre, Essex and Southampton with their friends. Here also sat the dramatic poets of the time to whom was accorded a free pass. Most important of all from our point of view were the shorthand writers, in the pay of piratical booksellers, who took down the dialogue, under pretence of criticising it, and thus preserved for posterity many plays that otherwise would have been lost. There was a ceaseless chatter of conversation between the fashionable spectators on the stage, interspersed with calls for drinks and lights for their pipes. Smoking went on throughout the performance. The actors and the audience, however, accepted these interruptions without much protest.

A trumpet blast started the performance. Then came the prologue, spoken by an actor in a long black coat. The performance of a tragedy was signalised by draping the stage with black; for a comedy, blue hangings were substituted. A placard hung upon one of the stage doors indicated the scene of the play—Venice or Verona. With the change of scene, the placard was changed. To keep up the spirits of the audience, there was a jester to dance between the acts.

No women ever appeared on the stage, and very few women went to see performances. The theatre was far too rough a place for decent women. The queen summoned the players to Court on special occasions; and Shakespeare's company often gave a "Command" performance. Hence in some of the plays like *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Merchant of Venice* flattering allusions are made for the benefit of the queen.

The stage consisted of a bare platform, with a curtain across the middle, separating the front from the rear stage. On the rear stage, unexpected scenes or characters were presented to the audience by simply drawing the curtain aside. At first little or no scenery was used, and this very lack of

scenery led to better acting since the actors had to be realistic enough to make the audience forget their shabby surroundings. By Shakespeare's day, however, painted scenery had appeared. Thus the stage was no longer colourless or dull. It was hung with tapestries and curtains which affected the emotional response of the audience. The actors wore splendid clothes largely inherited from noblemen: music, fireworks, guns and thunder were all used to suggest atmosphere and to give colour to eye and ear. There were contrivances for descents from heaven and for mounting aloft; there was the pageantry of processions and tableau; and there were properties which could be used to represent imaginary scenes. The audience was expected to imagine a lot, and to respond to an aesthetic experience as the result of seeing the stage and properties representing imaginary scenes in which actors created character and incident by making the words of an author come alive.

VI. SHAKESPEARE'S GREATNESS AS A PLAYWRIGHT

Two extreme views : Two theories have been offered to explain the greatness of Shakespeare. The romantic critics hold that in him "all came from within" and that we owe his plays to the over-mastering power of his genius alone. Practical and unimaginative men, however, assert that in Shakespeare "all came from without". He lived in a play-loving age, he studied the crowds, gave them what they wanted, and simply reflected their own thoughts and feelings. Probably the truth of the matter lies between these extreme views. Of his great genius there can be no question; but his genius was certainly shaped and enriched by external influences. Two outward influences were most powerful in developing his genius—the little village of Startford, and the great city of London. In Stratford he learned to know the natural man in his natural environment; in London he learned to know the social, the artificial man in the most unnatural of surroundings.

The variety of his gifts : Shakespeare's greatness or pre eminence as a dramatist is universally recognised. But wherein does this pre-eminence lie ? There is, indeed, hardly any glory of Shakespeare's drama which might not be matched by some other play of the period. Every element in

Shakespeare's drama might, in isolation, be matched by the best of his contemporaries. What is distinctive about Shakespeare is his combination of all the gifts which were scattered in the works of other playwrights of his time. He is superior to others by his many-sided curiosity and the extreme diversity of his talents. His genius was flexible to a marvellous degree. He adapted himself to the most diverse material and seemed to use it all with equal skill and enthusiasm. Into his narrative poems *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, he poured all his love for lyrical beauty and command of rhymes, while his plays cover and, indeed, go beyond every dramatic classification hitherto known; national history, tragedy, comedy, romantic and fairy-plays. But these categories do not suffice to show the variety of even his early plays. The word comedy includes plays so different as *Love's Labour's Lost* and the *Comedy of Errors* ; one being a fantasy made of sparkling dialogue, fireworks and word-play, and the other being a farce with an involved plot. No two of his dramas of English History have the same shape or a like movement. His great tragedies, *Othello*, *Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *Hamlet* are differentiated by such an astonishing variety of kind, presentment and dramatic movement that hardly any one formula fits them all. This diversity is to be found everywhere in Shakespearean drama. He shows equal aptitude for the tragic and the comic, the sentimental and the burlesque, lyrical fantasy and character-study, portraits of women and of men.

Characterisation : Besides his variety, Shakespeare's capital gift was certainly that he could depict characters, both historical and imaginary, with a surpassing vividness. This power he wielded easily, naturally, spontaneously, without ever giving an impression of effort. From the beginning there is life in all his characters, but as he advanced towards maturity his characters came to be more boldly outlined and more complex. His characters differ in sex, age, stage of life, virtues and vices, but all of them are alike in being alive. Their parts may be short, they may have to speak only some twenty lines of verse, but they are made unforgettable. He created a multitude of living characters such as have never been created by any other writer. His characters are at once living and true. Whether good or bad, whether moving among the

realities of history or among the most romantic happenings, his characters possesss an unfailing humanity, a striking realism. Rosalind, Portia, Juliet, Cleopatra, Caesar, Brutus, Orlando, Shylock, Falstaff, Touchstone, not to mention the great tragic heroes—indeed, the catalogue is endless.

The epic quality of Shakespeare's dramas: Shakespearean drama is as much epical as romantic. His six dramas of English History and three Roman tragedies, together with *Hamlet*, *Lear* and *Macbeth* (which are based on legendary chronicles accepted as genuine history by him and his public) form such a whole as is found nowhere else and is the solid bulwark of Shakespearean drama. The plays devoted to national history most plainly connect his work with the old religious drama, of which the original object was not mere pleasure but instruction and moral improvement. His theme in these historical plays is 'country' instead of "faith". He imparts knowledge of history as those old poets taught religion. These plays are a continuous history of England over a long period, the whole fifteenth century. Foreign war with its triumphs and disasters, years of prosperity and of misery, glory and shame, princes heroic and mean ; all succeed each other in his plays, painted impartially for a public enabled at once to marvel and to learn. Shakespeare keeps this breadth when he leaves London for Rome and Holinshed for Plutarch. Although no longer inspired by patriotism, he is inspired by the great names of ancient times Coriolanus, Brutus, Julius Ceasar, Antony, Cleopatra. His first care still is to breathe new life into famous men and great events. He succeeds in representing the past with human truth so deep and life so intense that his work has become complementary to that of the scholar. With him historical drama reaches the climax in such scenes as that in which the Roman mob, after applauding Brutus, is almost immediately turned against him by the moving eloquence of Antony, so that men weep at the sight of Caesar's body and cry out death to the conspirators.

Shakespeare's universality : It would be wrong to identify Shakespeare with any of his characters. His supremacy lies in this—that he could see and understand so much of life, could pierce the heart of so many passions, without falling a prey to any aspect of life ; that we say of him

that he is universal ; and we dare not say what was his personality. Every phase of feeling lay within the scope of Shakespeare's understanding and sympathy. There is no point of morals, of philosophy or of the conduct of life that he has not touched upon, no mystery of human nature that he has not penetrated. Life and death, love, wealth, poverty, the prizes of life and the way we gain them ; the characters of men and the influences and forces which affect them ; on all these questions Shakespeare enriched the world with his thought. In his plays we find pure mirth, bright and tender fancy, airy satire, ardent passion, questionings into the deep and terrible mysteries of life. In almost every play we have the most diverse elements, the high and the low, the great and the little, the noble and the base, the sad and the merry, brought under the dominance of one dramatic purpose. In Jonson's words, Shakespeare, "was not of an age, but of all time." So astonishingly widespread is his glory, that it might also be said that "he was not of a land, but of all lands.' Free of every theory, accepting all of life, rejecting nothing, uniting the real and the poetic, appealing to the most various men, to a rude workman as to a wit, Shakespeare's drama is a great river of life and beauty.

The dialogue. Another element of the greatness of Shakespeare is the perfect naturalness of his dialogue. Shakespeare is a master of dramatic dialogue. As De Quincey says, every form of natural interruption ; every form of hasty interrogative and ardent reiteration when a question has been evaded : every form of scornful repetition of the hostile words ; every impatient continuation of the hostile statement ; in short, all modes and formulae by which anger, hurry, irritation, scorn, impatience or excitement are expressed—these are as plentiful in Shakespeare's dialogue as in life itself. And how much they can add to the realistic effect of his drama is quite evident.

Style. Shakespeare had an amazing genius for words. He shows unrivalled powers of expression. The beauty of words, the aptness and originality of phrases, the wealth of striking similes and metaphors, the felicities of language, the richness and sweetness of verse—these are found in his plays to an astonishing degree. There is on every occasion such a multitudinous flow of words and images from Shakespeare's mind as nothing

seems able to stop. Indeed, the foremost dramatist of his age was also the foremost poet. The union of dramatic and lyric elements in the plays is perfect, absolute and beyond analysis. Beauty comes from the perfection of style and the versification, the variety of the images, and the accompanying music. There is a triumphant blending of words, metaphors and lyrical passion in his blank verse. In the capital scenes of the great tragedies—the dialogues of Romeo, and Juliet. Hamlet's soliloquies, the scene of the awakening of Othello's jealousy, of Lear's passionate railings or of Macbeth's hallucinations.—Shakespeare's mastery of the grand style is unmistakable. Shakespeare possessed in a superlative degree the faculty of compressing thought into language so memorable and so final that he is the most often quoted of all English writers. Indeed, his command over the resources of the language was unique; his vocabulary runs to some 15,000 words while that of Milton contains scarcely more than half that number.

VII. Shakespeare's Faults

Says Hudson, "The greatness of Shakespeare's work is apt to blind critics to his limitations and defects, but these must of course be recognised in any estimate of him. Broad as he was, he was essentially a man of his time, and while his plays are remarkable for their general truth to what is paramount in human nature, his interpretation of human nature is that of an age in many respects very different from our own. He wrote hurriedly and signs of hasty and ill-considered production are often apparent. In his occasional coarseness he reflects the low taste of the 'groundlings' to whom he had to appeal. At places his psychology is hopelessly crude and unconvincing; his style vicious; his wit forced and poor; his tragic language bombastic."

Among modern critics are to be found several who attack Shakespeare's power of characterisation, mock at what they call the "emptiness" of his philosophy and accuse him of snobbery. No serious attempt has, indeed, been made to question his genius as a poet but a number of modern writers have done their best to detach him from the great creative artists of the world and to place him "in the second order with Dickens, Scott and Dumas." Of course, Shakespeare's reputation is in no serious danger from these attacks because if he has

compelled the homage of such different men as Ben Jonson, Samuel Jonson, Hazlitt, Lamb, Coleridge, Shelley, Arnold, Carlyle, Rossetti, Swinburne, Victor Hugo, Lessing, Schlegel, Goethe, Heine, he has nothing to fear from a few reactionary critics.

(*a*) Let us first consider the charge of "empty philosophy" against Shakespeare. The truth is that in any clear and definite sense of the term there is no philosophy in Shakespeare's writings, nor any attempt at a philosophy. The idea of a philosophy or a message is essentially modern and is utterly alien to the Elizabethan spirit. Shakespeare was an artist and primarily concerned with the stuff of life itself, not with theorizing about life. His plays contain a dozen different points of view, but no definite conclusion. The attempts made by some of his admirers to squeeze a philosophy of life out of the speeches of his characters are unfair and foolish. The modern reader is unfortunately accustomed to the artist-preacher and therefore unduly insists upon a message or a philosophy from Shakespeare.

(*b*) The second charge pertains to characterisation. It would be insolent, indeed, to attack from the point of view of characterisation a dramatist who has created a rich gallery of men and women like Hamlet, Macbeth, Iago, Othello, Desdemona, Rosalind, and Juliet. Shakespeare shows the same subtlety and searching insight in the portraying of less cemplex personalities. A ready test of the actuality of his characters is the impression they make on the modern reader. Portia, Rosalind, Beatrice, Cleopatra, Juliet, are startlingly modern. Place them beside the women of Sheridan or Goldsmith and you realise how the latter are dated and how alive and fresh are Shakespeare's women. Beside them even the women of Dicknes and Thackeray seem old-fashioned. And the reason is that Shakespeare's women have the fundamental and primal qualities of womanhood, common to every age.

(*c*) A number of modern writers have insisted strongly on Shakespeare's snobbery, hinting that he was essentially undemocratic, hating the mob. According to one critic, *Coriolanus* is a "mine of insults" against the people. Another critic says that Shakespeare used the poor as material for fun to amuse his richer patrons and had no real sympathy for them.

Now, it is true that Shakespeare had no liking for the rough, uneducated mob. *Coriolanus* is a plain, unvarnished picture of a mob's fickleness and brutality. But we must recognise that Shakespeare was alive to the virtues and merits of the people at large. *Henry IV* shows the truth of this statement. Want of sympathy with the poor in their sufferings is not to be found anywhere in his plays.

VIII. Shakespearean Criticism through the Centuries

16th Century. Shakespeare's real greatness was apparently not suspected in his own life-time. The first criticism of his work is to be found in Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit* (1592) where he is attacked as an upstart crow beautified with the feathers of the university wits. But, during his life-time, many tributes were paid to the sweetness of his versification. The fact that Shakespeare was the most popular dramatist of his time made the academic critics cautious and suspicious. Even his fellow-dramatists lamented his lack of learning. Jonson complained of Shakespeare's bombast and lack of art ; and when the players praised Shakespeare because "he never blotted out a line", Jonson cried, "Would he had blotted a thousand !" But Jonson was still a great admirer of Shakespeare. He wrote the following lines on Shakespeare's death : "I loved the man, and do honour his memory on this side idolatry as much as any." Jonson said that Shakespeare was not only the "soul of the age" but "for all time" ; not only "the wonder of our stage" but also the "star of poets."

17th Century. Through the whole of the seventeenth century, Shakespeare's natural gifts were contrasted with Jonson's art and learning. In his *L'Allegro*, for instance, Milton refers to Shakespeare's "native wood-notes wild." Although Shakespeare's plays were popular at the Court of Charles I, there was no written criticism of importance until after the Restoration.. Dryden expressed a whole-hearted admiration for Shakespeare's poetic genius and for his power of creating characters. But, strange as it may seem, Dryden believed that the wit, language, conversation, and taste of his own age were superior to those of the age of Elizabeth. Still when Dryden speaks not for his age but from his heart, his admiration for Shakespeare is warm enough. The critics generally blamed the barbarism of the Elizabethan Age for the

faults they professed to find in Shakespeare's plays. Thomas Rymer in his *Short View of Tragedy* (1692) denounced *Othello*. Rymer's criticism was more hostile than that of his contemporaries. Rowe admitted the justice of that criticism though he suggested that Rymer ought to have pointed out the beauties as well as the faults. Dennis lamented Shakespeare's neglect of poetic justice and his ignorance of the classics.

18th Century. The weighing of faults and beauties was the favourite exercise of the 18th century. This is evident in the prefaces of Pope and Johnson. Pope's preface is largely in the tradition of the previous century. Shakespeare "is not so much an imitator, as an instrument of Nature; and "tis not so just to say that he speaks from her, as that she speaks through him." He argues that Shakespeare's faults were largely due to the bad taste of his audience and to the fact that he was an actor. The following remark of Pope surely shows his breadth of outlook. "To judge therefore of Shakespeare by Aristotle's rules is like trying a man by the laws of one country, who acted under those of another."

Johnson's great preface is in some ways the culmination of the Shakespearean criticism of the previous hundred years. He tends to summarise faults and beauties, as so many of his predecessors had done. He finds fault by saying that Shakespeare seems to write without any moral purpose, that his plots are loosely constructed, and that his jokes are often vulgar. But Johnson defends Shakespeare's mingling of tragedy and comedy and his neglect of the three unities. He praises Shakespeare as a faithul mirror of manners and of life, as a writer of comic dialogue, and as a depictor of character.

The Romantic Period. The romantic critics, Landor, De Quincey, Lamb, Coleridge, Hazlitt, all had something to say about Shakespeare. Coleridge's greatest contribution is his continual insistence that every work of art must be judged by its own organic laws. If this sometimes led him to explain away Shakespeare's faults, it also led him to recognise qualities which earlier critics had missed. Coleridge has written brilliant notes on individual passages and profound comments on the poetry of Shakespeare; but he specializes in analysis of character and it is this side of his work which sets the tone for most 19th century criticism.

Hazlitt, the best of all dramatic critics, was less concerned with characterization than Coleridge had been. Occasionally Hazlitt allows his political views to spoil his judgment ; he is often too content with a sort of running commentary of the plays under discussion ; and he owes a great deal to Coleridge and something to Lamb. He makes many true remarks, but they are the kind of remarks which might be made by any ordinary intelligent reader. Yet, with all his faults, Hazlitt gives us a fuller and more satisfactory account of Shakespeare's plays than any previous critic ; and at his best (for instance, on *Macbeth* and *Twelfth Night*), he is admirable.

The Victorian Age : Dowden in his *Shakespeare : His Mind and Art* (1875) divided Shakespeare's career into such periods as "In the depths" and "on the heights", thus trying to connect the writer with his work. This book found much favour with literary students and scholars. Another Victorian book that had a long vogue was Moulton's scientific study of *Shakespeare as a Drama ic Artist* (1885) in which he attempted to build up a theory of drama from Shakespeare's practice ; but his views are too rigid and logical. Both in this book and in *The Moral System of Shakespeare*, Moulton projected into Shakespeare's work his own moral views.

Swinburne wrote a good deal on Shakespeare, but he dealt too lavishly in superlatives and his inflated style does not find much favour today. He does at least convey to the reader a sense of excitement. The best Victorian criticism of Shakespeare is to be found in Pater's essays on *Measure for Measure* and on the English History plays. Matthew Arnold, the greatest Victorian critic, did not make much of a contribution to Shakespearean criticism.

Twentieth Century. Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904) marked the culmination of nineteenth-century criticism, and it is still an impressive book. In spite of its limitations, this book is a great monument to the closet Shakespeare. Bradley's conception of Shakespeare's characters is still an orthodoxy to be questioned.

Robert Bridges in *The Influence of the Audience on Shakespeare's Dramas* protested that Shakespeare's characters were not consistent and that, under the bad influence of the

groundlings, the dramatist continually sacrificed psychological truth to theatrical situation.

Stoll wrote a series of books on Shakespeare, the best being *Art and Artifice in Shakespeare* (1933). Stoll's books were designed to prove that Sakespeare deliberately chose to have the maximum contrast between the hero and his actions, that the inconsistency of character, obvious in the study, would not be noticed in performance, and that poetic drama dispenses with psychological truth.

A large number of other noteworthy studies of Shakespeare have appeared during our times. A bare mention of these works would suffice here :

Schucking	: *Character Problems in Shakespeare's Plays* (1919).
Muriel Bradbrook	: *Elizabethan Stage Conditions. Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy.*
S. L. Bethal	: *Shakespeare and the Popular Dramatic Traditions* (1944).
J. I. M. Stewart	: *Character and Motive in Shakespeare* (1949)
W. W. Laurence	: *Shakespeare's Problem Comedies* (1931).
O. J. Campbell	: *Shakespeare's Satire* (1943).
Tillyard	: *Shakespeare's History Plays* (1944).
G. B. Harrison	: *Shakespeare at Work.*
Lily B. Campbell	: *Shakespeare's Tragic Heroes* (1930).
Ruth L. Anderson	: *Elizabethan Psychology and Shakespeare* (1927).
W. C. Cury	: *Shakespeare's Philosophical Patterns* (1937)
Noble	: *Shakespeare's Use of Song* (1923).
Sir Edmund Cambers	: *Elizabethan Stage* (1923).
Dover Wilson	: *What Happens in Hamlet. The Fortune of Falstaff. The Essential Shakespeare.*
H. B. Charlton	: *Shakespearean Comedy* (1937). *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1948).
John Palmer	: *Comic Characters of Shakespeare* (1945-46).

George Garden in 1944, Thomas Marc Parrott in 1949,

S. C. Sen Gupta in 1950 published studies of Shakespeare's comedies.

The Shakesperean criticism of the past three decades has been deeply affected by scholarship. On the whole, critics have come to put more stress on Shakespeare the conscious artist and we hear much less of the uneducated genius. Books making this approach to Shakespeare are :

Miss Edith Sitwell : *A Note-book on William Shakespeare.*
Balwin : *Shakespeare's Five Act Structure.*
Alexander : *Shakespeare's Life and Art (1939).*
Wyndham Lewis : *The Lion and the Fox.*

The studies of Shakespeare by G. L. Kittredge (1916), Sisson (1934) and R. W. Chambers (1937) also present the dramatist as a single-minded artist and not as a single-minded businessman depicted by Lee. The approach of all these writers is to be distinguished from that of, say, Walter Raleigh's *Shakespeare* (English Men of Letters Series), 1907. Even Middleton Murry who has produced the impression of a "romantic" Shakespeare, has been conscious of Shakespeare the artist both in *Shakespeare* (1935) and in *Countries of the Mind* (1931).

H. Granville-Barker in his *Prefaces* (1927—47) tried to find a way of presenting Shakespeare on the stage so as to retain the spirit of Elizabethan conventions though using lighting and scenery. The function of imagery in Shakespeare's plays has been studied by a number of modern critics like Caroline Spurgeon in *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us* (1935). Other books that might be mentioned in this connection are F.C. Kolbe's *Shakespeare's Way* (1930), Edward A. Armstrong's *Shakespeare's Imagination* (1946), R.B. Heilman's *This Great Stage* (1948), Roy Walker's *The Time is out of Joint* (1948) and *The Time is Free* (1949).

Wilson Knight has produced four books on Shakespeare : *The Wheel of Fire* ; *The Imperial Theme* (1931) ; *The Shakespearean Tempest* (1932) ; and *The Crown of Life* (1947). He is concerned primarily with the analysis of poetic symbolism, the interpretation of the plays in relation to each other and the subordination of character to the poetic meaning of the play. Knight's work has had a considerable influence on his successors.

T.S. Eliot has written little about Shakespeare, though his critical methods and example have proved a source of inspiration to others. The numerous essays on Shakespeare that have appeared in *Scrutiny* by James Smith, J.C. Maxwell, L.C. Knights, D.A. Traversi and F.R. Lewis, owe something to Eliot, to Empson, and to Knight, and form together a substantial body of criticism, starting always from the text and working onwards to an interpretation of the whole play.

Although the last 50 years have perhaps produced a tremendous amount of Shakespearean criticism, yet modern criticism does not supersede that of early periods. Knight adds something to Bradley but Bradley has still to be read. Bradley is based on Coleridge and Hazlitt; but we get something from Coleridge not to be found in Bradley. After romantic excesses we can return to Johnson and Dryden with some relief. In two respects, however, the moderns have an advantage. They base their work on a more elaborate knowledge of Elizabethan drama and its background, and they unconsciously find in Shakespeare what the present age requires.

IX. THE PLOTS OF THE MORE IMPORTANT PLAYS OF SHAKESPEARE IN OUTLINE

Antony and Cleopatra : Antony, infatuated with Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, returns to Rome at the threat of destruction from the triumvir Octavius. They become reconciled, and Antony marries Octavius's sister. When Cleopatra learns of this, she becomes furious, until she learns how homely the sister is. In his infatuation, Antony returns to Egypt and challenges Octavius at the naval battle of Actium, which is lost by Antony owing to Cleopatra's desertion. Yet Antony forgives her; but his Roman followers desert to Octavius. In Egypt, Antony loses another battle. To win him finally, Cleopatra sends him word that she is dead; and he falls upon his sword. Seeing that Octavius will give her no mercy, Cleopatra lets an Egyptian serpent, the asp, kill her and is buried beside Antony.

As You Like It : Rosalind, daughter of a banished Duke, is exiled into the Forest of Arden, where her father is living in hiding. She is in love with a young man, Orlando who, driven out of home, also goes into the forest, and joins the

Duke's happy company. Rosalind, disguised as a youth, jests at Orlando's love sickness, and offers to cure him if he will make love to her as if she were Rosalind.

Rosalind grows more and more infatuated with Orlando. When the youth is wounded, saving his wicked brother's life, she faints. She arranges a quadruple wedding, which restores Orlando to her, and unites three other pairs of lovers. The banished Duke is restored to his estates when his wicked brother turns religious.

Hamlet, Prince of Denmark : Hamlet is recalled from his studies at the University of Wittenburg by the news that his father is dead, and that his mother, Queen Gertrude, has married Hamlet's wicked uncle, Claudius. An encounter with his father's ghost enables him to learn that the uncle has killed his father, the king. Hamlet pretends to be insane, while deciding what to do. He even pretends insanity to the girl he loves, Ophelia, daughter of the old counsellor, Polonius.

Hamlet presents a play, using the plot of his father's murder, and watches Claudius's discomfiture, proof of his guilt. While Hamlet is reproaching his mother for her conduct, he kills a spy hidden behind his curtains, and discovers that he has killed Polonius. Ophelia goes pitiably insane and drowns herself; and her brother joins with Claudius in a plot to kill Hamlet in the fencing match, in which Leartes is to use a poisoned weapon. He stabs Hamlet with this, the two exchange swords in the melee, and Hamlet kills Leartes, and as he is dying, kills his uncle, while Queen Gertrude unintentionally swallows the poisoned wine prepared for Hamlet. Fortinbras of Norway marches in, to restore peace in the distracted country.

Henry IV : **Part A** : While Henry IV is troubled with war against the Scots and with plots at home headed by Henry Percy (called Hotspur for his quick temper), the king's son, Prince Hal plots with his riotous chum Sir John Falstaff to rob travellers near London. When the robbery succeeds, Prince Hal and a friend put the cowardly Falstaff to flight; and later, during his boasting lies of the encounter, they reveal the truth.

Prince Hal contritely promises his father to mend his ways, and is sent to war, Falstaff beside him, against the conspirators. In the conflict Prince Hal kills Hotspur, and the rebels are utterly defeated.

Henry IV : Part II : The remaining conspirators prepare to fight the king, while Falstaff stars north to enlist soldiers. Falstaff, one of the world's greatest comic characters, riots and revels with Prince Hal and the rest until the king summons them back to duty. The rebels break apart, but the sick king longs for the end of his troubles. Meanwhile Falstaff accepts bribes to release likely soldiers, and enlists an army of scarecrows.

By the treachery of one of the king's generals, the rebels are defeated. The king dies of his illness, after a quarrel with Prince Hal and a reconciliation. The prince ascends the throne as Henry V and Falstaff rushes to London to revel with him. But Henry the king will have nothing to do with the old rioter, banishes him, and continues planning an invasion of France.

Henry V : In this play, perhaps the most brilliant and stirring of all history plays, Henry V proceeds with his plan to invade France, to take over the crown as the hereditary ruler of the overseas land. Falstaff dies, and his followers join the army of invasion. At Harfleur, Henry's bravery is unmatchable, and he marches his sick, worn-out veterans to confront the larger French army at Agincourt.

Henry circulates in disguise among his soldiers, to make sure of their bravery. Pistol, one of Falstaff's old cronies, is humbled by the fiery Welsh Captain Fluellen, and returns to England to avoid the death his thieving companions have met. France settles the war by marrying the French princess Katherine to the English king. The epilogue announces the birth of a son, Henry the Sixth, king of both England and France.

King Lear : Aged King Lear of Britain surrenders this throne to his hypocritical daughters, Goneril and Regan, disowning the one loving daughter, Cordelia, because she will not compete in flattery with her sisters. Lear plans to live alternately with the wicked daughters, who both reject him. Lear, homeless on the heath, while a storm rages, loses his mind.

The evil daughters plan to kill their father, and blind the noble Duke of Gloucester, his wicked son Edmund helping to make this possible.

Edgar, Gloucester's faithful son, saves his blind old father; and Cordelia rescues her mad father from the death and the storm. Goneril and Regan add lust for Edmund to their crimes. Edmund, now English general, imprisons Lear and Cordelia, and plans to kill them. Goneril poisons her sister and commits suicide, when her own adultery is discovered. Old Gloucester dies, Cordelia is hanged, and her broken-hearted father dies trying to revive her. Only Edgar and two faithful lords are left to patch up broken fragments of the kingdom and restore England to prosperity once more.

Othello, The Moor Of Venice : Iago, the evil lieutenant of the great Venetian general Othello, hates his master because another officer, Cassio, has been promoted above him. When Othello elopes with Desdemona, daughter of a Venetian Senator, Iago tries to disgrace Othello. But Othello is cleared by the Duke, and sent to head an expedition to Cyprus. Iago is to follow, bringing Desdemona. Iago gets Cassio drunk and disgraced, and determines to break up the happy marriage by making Othello jealous of Cassio.

He has Cassio urge Desdemona to intercede for him with her husband ; and Iago tells Othello that this is a love tryst. As proof, he forces his wife, Emilia, Desdemona's maid, to give him a handker-chief which Desdemona had lost, and manages to have Cassio deliver the handkerchief to his mistress Binaca. Othello is convinced of Desdemona's guilt and kills her in her bed. As Emilia is revealing the truth to Othello, Iago stabs her. Othello wounds Iago, and kills himself. Cassio orders Iago away to the torture.

Romeo and Juliet : Romeo, heir of the Montagues of Verona, embroiled in an old feud with the Capulets, goes disguised to a ball given by Old Capulet, and falls in love with Juliet, daughter of the hostile house. Tybalt, a fiery Capulet is forbidden by the host to fight at the party. Beneath a balcony, Romeo hears Juliet in the moonlight confess her love. The two get secretly married in the cell of Friar Lawrence, a friend of Romeo's.

Tybalt tries to pick a quarrel with Romeo. Instead he kills the hot-headed Mercutio, of Romeo's party; and Romeo then kills Tybalt. Romeo is banished; and Juliet's parents insist she marry Paris, who is kin to the Prince of Verona. Juliet, at Friar Lawrence's advice, takes a sleeping potion, and is pronounced dead, and carried to the Capulet vaults. The friar writes this to Romeo; the letter miscarries. Romeo visits the vault, and takes poison and dies. When Juliet is revived, she stabs herself with Romeo's dagger. Over the graves of these two, the repentant survivors end their quarrelling.

The Tempest: Prospero, Duke of Milan, absorbed in studies of magic, is ousted by his brother, Antonio, and by Alosnso king of Naples. He lands with his lovely daughter Miranda on a desert island. Here he is served by the lumpish Caliban, more than half beast, and the fairy-like Ariel. A tempest brings his enemies of Milan near, and Prospero has them wrecked on the island. Ferdinand sees Miranda and falls in love with her; but Prospero pretends to frown on the suit.

Antonio and Alonso's brother plot Alonso's death; Ariel saves him. Drunken Trinculo, a jester, and Stephano, a butler join Caliban, who is fascinated by their liquor and swears to serve them for ever. They plot to depose Prospero, and make Stephano king, with Miranda as his queen. The magician has a wedding masque for Miranda and Ferdinand, but has Ariel harass the conspirators about the island.

Prospero has the conspirators brought before him, and orders Antonio to restore him his dukedom. He displays to Alonso his son Ferdinand, and Miranda within the cave, and then the shipmaster reports that the ship is in good seaworthy condition again. Prospero ends his practice of magic, and announces that the next day he will return to his dukedom.

Twelfth Night: Orsino, Duke of Illyria, presents a page boy to the Countess Olivia, whom he is wooing, not knowing that the page is the shipwrecked Viola in disguise, really in love with him. Olivia falls in love with the page, though mourning for her brother. Her household includes the mournful Malvolio; her riotous uncle Sir Toby Belch; and Sir Andrew Aguecheek who is wooing Olivia.

Servants who dislike Malvolio plot his discomfiture, by letting him find a letter in Olivia's hand-writing, saying she loves him. The plot works. Malvolio is held to be mad, and is imprisoned. Viola's brother arrives, and when his friend Antonio is arrested and appeals to Viola, thinking it is Sebastian he is astouned when Viola says she never saw him.

Olivia mistakes Sebastian for Viola, and marries him before she understands what is happening. Further misunderstandings are all cleared up. Sir Toby marries Olivia's waiting woman, Maria, and the Duke marries Viola.

The Winter's Tale : Leontes, King of Sicilia, becomes insanely jealous of his wife, Hermione, suspecting her of intimacy with his friend Polixenes, King of Bohemia. Polixenes, warned by Leontes's faithful friend. Comillo, flies back to Bohemia. Leontes publicly brands Hermione an adulteress and when her baby is born, he orders an underling to take the child to a waste place and abandon it.

The oracle of Apollo declares Hermione innocent ; but Leontes does not believe it. Hermione is carried out, reported as dead. The underling names the child Perdita and abandons it in Bohemia, where a bear kills him. A shepherd adopts the baby.

Sixteen years later, Polixenes' son, Florizel, meets Perdita and falls in love with her. The king forbids the marriage ; Florizel determines to elope. They flee to Sicilia, followed by Camillo and Polixenes, and Leontes identifies her as his lost daughter. The king is offered a perfet statue of his dead wife, in her chapel ; it comes to life, for it is Hermione, who has stayed in hiding awaiting her daughter's return. Florizel triumphantly weds his Perdita, all rancours and envies over.

Macbeth : Macbeth and Banquo, generals of King Duncan of Scotland, returning from a victory, are stopped by three witches, who prophesy nobilities and the kingship for Macbeth, and that Banquo will be the father of kings, though he will never be one himself. The king hails Macbeth with the titles the witches had prophesied ; and he and his pitiless wife, Lady Macbeth, plan to murder Duncan while he is a guest in Macbeth's castle.

Macbeth, spurred on by his wife, stabs the king ; and when this is discovered the next day, he murders the king's grooms,

as if they were gulity. Duncan's two sons flee to England, and Macbeth is crowned king of Scotland. Macbeth has Banquo murdered, knowing that Banquo suspects his crime. At a state banquet, the ghost of Banquo frightens Macbeth into practically revealing his murder. Word comes that Malcolm, the dead Duncan's son, has been joined in England with brave Macduff, and that they plan to return and defeat Macbeth.

The witches trick Macbeth by ambiguous prophecies. He has Macduff's wife and children murdered. Lady Macbeth, her mind overweighed with her sins, walks in her sleep, confessing them. As Macbeth prepares to face the enemy, he learns his wife has died, perhaps through suicide. Macbeth is killed by Macduff, and Malcolm is hailed the king of Scotland.

The Merchant Of Venice : Antonio, a rich merchant of Venice, pledges a pound of his flesh to the usurer Shylock, to obtain money to finance Bassanio's wooing of the fair Portia of Belmont. By the test of the three caskets, Bassanio wins Portia ; his friend Gratiano wins Nerissa, Portia's maid ; and their friend Lorenzo elopes with Jessica, daughter of the Jewish usurer.

News comes from Venice that Antonio's ventures at sea have come to grief, and that Shylock demands his pound of flesh. Portia disguises herself as a young judge, and presides over the trial. When Shylock will show no mercy, she forfeits Shylock's property for plotting the death of a Ventian citizen. Antonio gives up his right to half the fortune, on condition that it go to Lorenzo and Jessica, and that Shylock turn Christian.

Portia and Nerissa return to Belmont to tease Bassanio and Gratiano for surrendering to the masquerading judge and his clerk two rings they had sworn never to part with. They reveal their masquerade ; news come that three of Antonio's ships have come safely to port ; and all ends well for everybody except the avaricious Shylock.

A Midsummer Night's Dream : The wedding of Theseus, Duke of Athens, is to be celebrated by a play given by mechanics—Bottom, a weaver, Quince, a carpenter, Flute, a bellows-mender, and others, the play being the love story of Pyramus and Thisbe. Lysander and Hermia are in love, but

her father sternly orders her to marry Demetrius. She plans to escape to the woods; her friend Helena, who loves Demetrius, reveals the plan.

The wood is haunted by Oberon, the fairy king, and Titania, his queen, who are quarrelling over the ownership of a human child. To punish Titania, Oberon sends Puck to bewitch her, so that she will fall in love with the first creature she sees. This is Bottom, on whom Puck has placed an ass's head. Puck has also bewitched the lovers in error, so that they are infatuated with the wrong persons. Oberon cures this, and releases Titania at last from her absurd infatuation for Bottom.

Demetrius gives up Hermia for Helena, and the proper couples are united. The absurd play is given ; the humans depart : and the reconciled fairies close the delightful fantastic play.

Much ado about nothing : Two gentlemen of Arragon, Benedick and Claudio, are in love with Beatrice and her cousin Hero of Messina. But Benedick and Beatrice hide their love in sharp wit, and Claudio is shy about proposing. His sovereign, Don Pedro, offers to woo Hero for Claudio; Don John, Don Pedro's wicked brother, plots to spoil the match and humiliate his brother.

The plot fails. Benedick and Beatrice are shamed by their friends into admitting their love for each other. But wicked Don John pretends that two of the servants are really Hero and a lover, and stops the wedding, the interruption causing Hero to faint. She is advised to pretend death, and Benedick agrees to avenge her wrongs by killing Claudio. Two dumb constables untangle the mix-up : Claudio marries Hero disguised as the governor's niece ; and the wicked Don John is captured. Even Benedick and Beatrice astound their friends by deciding to marry.

CORIOLANUS

1. The Date of the Play

Likely date of composition : 1608-9 : Critics are more or less agreed as to the date of the composition of *Coriolanus*. In other words, there is little controversy with regard to the date of *Coriolanus*. Critics have fixed 1608-1609 as the date of the composition of this play. In judging the date of the composition of a play by Shakespeare, critics take into account two kinds of evidence, *external evidence* and *internal evidence*. By external evidence we mean references to a play in contemporary writings, or any lines or passages in contemporary writings which possess any similarity to certain lines and passages in Shakespeare's play. By internal evidence we mean the metre, style of writing, and the spirit, atmosphere or prevailing mood of a play.

External evidence in the case of *Coriolanus* **:** There is little external evidence in the case of *Coriolanus* to serve as a clue to fix the date of its composition. The play was published in 1623, seven years after Shakespeare's death, and there is no mention of the play in any contemporary writing. However, there is a phrase which occurs in Ben Jonson's play *The Silent Woman* and which seems to have been based on a similar phrase in Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*. The relevant sentence in *The Silent Woman* reads thus : "Well, Dauphine, you have lurched your friends of the better half of the garland-" In Shakespeare's play, Cominuis, describing Coriolanus's bravery in Act II Scene *ii*, says, ' He lurch'd all swords of the garland". Now the phrase "to lurch a sword of the garland" is not an idiom or a proverbial saying. The phrase is a coinage of Shakespeare, and Ben Jonson could have used it only if he found it in Shakespeare's play. In other words, *Coriolanus* must have been written earlier than *The Silent Woman* because only then would it have been possible for Ben Jonson to parody Shakespeare's phrase. *The Silent Woman* was written in 1609. So it would be reasonable to assume that *Coriolanus* was written somewhat earlier than *The Silent Woman*. The date of *Coriolanus* may

thus be fixed as 1608-9, and this conclusion is quite in harmony with the internal evidence of the play.

Internal evidence of the date of *Coriolanus*. (*i*) **Metre :** Judged by metrical tests, *Coriolanus* belongs to the end of Shakespeare's third period* of composition or to the beginning of the fourth period. Rhyme is rare ; the proportion of lines having a pause at the end is much less than in the plays of earlier periods ; and there are frequent pauses in the midst of lines, and the sense runs on from one line to another. This would suggest that *Coriolanus* was written some time between the date of *Antony and Cleopatra* (1608) and the romances of the fourth period (1608-1612).

(*ii*) **Style**. The evidence of style corroborates that of metre. The style of *Coriolanus* does not have the limpidity and finish of *Julius Caesar* and *Hamlet*, plays of the third period (1601—1608). The music of *Coriolanus* is more rugged, though to some ears grander. There is, again, an abrupt "terseness of phrase", for instance : "his pupil-age man-enter'd thus" (Act II scene ii line 96). The effects gained are volcanic rather than beautiful; "sudden explosions of sublimity or pathos." There is, too, a great variation of level in *Coriolanus* ; passages of flatness are followed by outbursts of quick and daring metaphor. All these features of the style of *Coriolanus* connect the play with the end of Shakespeare's third period or the beginning of the fourth period.

(*iii*) **Thought** : The mental outlook of *Coriolanus*, again, shows a strong resemblance to the plays of the later third period (*Troilus and Cressida, Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Timon of Athens*), which are the "dramas of despair." Human nature in these dramas appears pitiful, and even weak; there is hardly a character in these plays who wins our fullest sympathy. This was a period of pessimism for Shakespeare.

Shakespeare's plays have been grouped in four periods of Shakespeare's activity ; (i) 1588 to 1595 : During this period were written *Henry VI*, *Richard III*, *Richard II*. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, etc. (ii) 1595-1601 : *King John*, *Henry IV*, *Henry V*, *Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, *Much Ado About Ntohing*, *Twelfth Night*, etc (*iii*) 1601-1608 : *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Antony aud Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus* (*iv*) 1608-1612 : *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*.

The influence of this pessimism is powerful in *Coriolanus*. The general atmosphere of *Coriolanus* is much the same as that of *Antony and Cleopatra* which was written in 1608. *Coriolanus* was probably written soon after *Antony and Cleopatra*, 1608-9. This date agrees with the date indicated by the external evidence mentioned above.

Additional evidence : Apart from the evidence mentioned above, it is believed that there are in the play a few references to some of the events which had happened during, or a little before, the period during which this play was written. These references, unconvincing in the main, are supposed to support the date of 1608-9 fixed as the date of the composition of the play. (*i*) There is a version of the "fable of the belly" in Camden's *Remains Concerning Britain* from where Shakespeare seems to have borrowed some of the wording for Menenius's narrative. Camden's book was published in 1605, which means that *Coriolanus* could not have been written earlier than that year.

(*ii*) The play contains the phrase "the coal of fire upon the ice" (Act I scene i line 168). This phrase is supposed to refer to the severe winter of 1607-8 when the river Thames became frozen. That means that *Coriolanus* was written soon after 1607-8, most probably in 1608-9.

(*iii*) London experienced a scarcity of corn in 1608-9, and as the citizens in *Coriolanus* are clamouring for corn in the opening scene, it is thought that Shakespeare had in mind the dearth of corn in London when writing his play. But this is a far-fetched idea. The dearth of corn in Rome is mentioned by Plutarch himself. The scarcity of corn in the opening scene of *Coriolanus* could not therefore have anything to do with the dearth in London.

(*iv*) The use of the phrase "the ripest mulberry" (Act III scene ii line 79) in the play is believed to have been derived from the encouragement given by King James in 1609 to the planting of mulberry trees for the breeding of silk-worms. This, it is argued, is additional support for the date 1608-9 as the date of the composition of this play. But this, again, is a far-fetched view.

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2. The Source of *Coriolanus* and Shakespeare's Treatment of His Source

The historical outline of Shakespeare's play *Coriolanus* was taken, with a few omissions, from Plutarch. Plutarch was an ancient Greek biographer whose chief work was *Lives* consisting of the biographies of twentythree Greeks and twenty-three Romans, arranged in pairs. A French writer Jacques Amyot (1513-1593) translated the *Lives* of Plutarch into French while Sir Thomas North (1535—1601) translated the Frenchman's version into English. Sir Thomas North's rendering was not a strictly accurate version; but Shakespeare who knew no Greek or French, had access only to the English rendering of Sir Thomas North.

Shakespeare had already used North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives* for writing his *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, but in both these cases Shakespeare had taken much liberty with his source. That is, Shakespeare had considerably modified the material of his source in the writing of *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* to suit his own dramatic purposes, while in respect of language Shakespeare's debt to North was very slight. But in the case of *Coriolanus*, Shakespeare did not permit himself this free hand. A comparison of North's translation of Plutarch's *Life of Coriolanus* with the passages in Shakespeare's play shows that in this play Shakespeare is indebted to North for very much more than the bare details of the plot. In the case of no other play has Shakespeare followed his source so closely and continuously. Not only is the historical groundwork of the play all derived from North (and, therefore, from Plutarch), but verbal borrowings from North's language are frequent.

In spite of that, it must be recognised that Shakespeare had to mould his material to suit the needs of the dramatic form. Sir Thomas North translated Plutarch's narrative into English. But Shakespeare was writing a drama, not a narrative. Dramatic necessity forced Shakespeare *firstly* to compress the available historical matter, *secondly* to omit certain matters occurring in Plutarch, and *thirdly* to make certain additions to the available historical data.

(*i*) **Examples of compression :** In certain cases,

Shakespeare has shortened Plutarch's account. For instance, Plutarch mentions two seditions (or mutinies), the first based on the exorbitant interest charged by money-lenders and the second owing to a corn famine. Shakespeare for dramatic purposes combines these two seditions into one, making the corn famine the chief cause of people's mutiny (Act I, scene i). Another example of dramatic compression is to be found in the process of Coriolanus's impeachment (Act III, scene i). Plutarch makes the people turn suddenly against Coriolanus, and their rejection of him as consul ends the episode. Coriolanus's speech on the occasion of the corn-distribution with his reflections on the tribunes is the immediate cause of his impeachment. Shakespeare brings the refusal of the consulship into direct bearing with the conflict, and makes Coriolanus repeat his speech on the corn question, which is supposed to have happened some time before. In Plutarch, again, the action is spread over some days. There is the tumult, a meeting of the senate next day, a meeting of the people, a temporary respite, and an adjournment of three days before the final scene of the impeachment. All these preliminaries have been combined by Shakespeare into one scene (Act III, scene i), though he has taken some details from each of those preliminaries : for instance, the proposal about the Tarpeian rock which in Plutarch occurs at the first meeting of the people. By this method, Shakespeare achieves concentration of dramatic effect which otherwise would have been greatly weakened because of dispersion and looseness of material.

(*ii*) **Examples of omission** : In Plutarch there are battles, invasions, and embassies which Shakespeare does not mention at all ; and there are in Plutarch whole passages which Shakespeare merely glances at by an allusion. Plutarch is copious in the details of the battles between the Romans and the Volscians, but Shakespeare omits many details for dramatic purposes. In Plutarch there is, between the Volscian war and the suing for the consulship, an embassy from the people of Velitrae seeking the re-colonisation of their city ; and there are certain raids by Marcus into the dominion of the Antiates. But Shakespeare completely omits these, as being irrelevant to his story. In Plutarch, again, there are certain preliminaries to Marcius's invasion of Rome—the omens in Rome, and the

incident of the games in which an affront is put on the Volscians leading the Volscian senate to favour the war. Shakespeare omits these in Act IV, scene vi. In Plutarch, the result of Cominius's embassy to Coriolanus is a respite of thirty days. In Shakespeare (Act V, scene i), there is no visible result of this embassy. A gap of thirty days in the play would have meant a certain weakening of the dramatic effect ; so in Shakespeare, Menenius's embassy seems to follow close on that of Cominius.

(*iii*) **Additions.** We also find in the play certain additions to Plutarch, for which the needs of the drama are responsible. (*a*) There are whole scenes or parts of scenes in the play which have no parallel in Plutarch. Sometimes their object is to introduce the characters. Such are Act I, scenes ii and iii, the former introducing Aufidius to us and the latter introducing Volumnia, Virgilia, and Valeria. All these names and persons do occur in Plutarch, but otherwise these two scenes owe little to Plutarch. Sometimes the object is to keep the different parts of the action in mind, as for instance Act IV, scene iii which has no parallel in North and which merely serves to shift the centre of action from Rome to the Volscian country and to inform us that the Volscians are meditating a second attack on Roman territory. (*b*) Then, again the characters, especially those of Menenius and Aufidius, are more developed in Shakespeare's play than in Plutarch, whole scenes being introduced merely to illustrate them, for instance Act I, scene x which has no parallel in Plutarch and in which Aufidius is shown as forming a stern resolution to kill Marcius by fair means or foul. Similarly, in Act II, scene i Coriolanus is shown as objecting to put on the "gown of humility". According to Plutarch, Coriolanus did not raise any such objection. Shakespeare makes Coriolanus do so in order to emphasize the pride of the man and thus to add a greater definiteness to our conception of his character. (*c*) Further, Shakespeare tries to rationalise those events of which Plutarch gives only the meagre results. Shakespeare does so by supplying fuller motives ; for example, a good deal of Act II is devoted to such "expansion". In Plutarch, the people turn suddenly against Coriolanus and their rejection of him as consul ends an episode. Shakespeare, throughout Act III, rationalises Plutarch's account. (*d*) Next, Shakespeare adds several

touches of "tragic irony" which serve to knit the construction closer but which are absent from Plutarch. For instance, in Act II scene i, Volumnia expresses her belief that Rome will confer the consulship upon her son. Subsequent events lead to the banishment of Coriolanus. Thus Volumnia's hope as expressed in Act II, scene i, lines 190—91 becomes an example of tragic irony. Again, in Act III, scene i, lines 19—20 Coriolanus expresses the wish to seek Aufidius in Antium in order to "oppose his hatred fully". But subsequently, Coriolanus seeks Aufidius in Antium as an ally and is eventually murdered by Aufidius's friends. Thus Coriolanus's wish as expressed in Act III, scene i, becomes an example of tragic irony.

Verbal borrowings. In many passages of Coriolanus, we have the very language of North's translation of Plutarch. This is conspicuously the case in Act V, scene iii, lines 94—148, where Volumnia is pleading to her son to spare Rome. Volumnia's speech here is almost an actual transcription of the language of North.

3. The Time of the Play

The action of the play *Coriolanus* covers the period 494 B.C. to 490 B.C. of Roman history. Plutarch's narrative embraces this period only, and Shakespeare follows Plutarch in this matter.

4. Explanatory Notes on "Patricians", "Plebeians", "Tribunes", "Aediles", "Volscians", "Antium", "Consul" "Senate", "Forum", "Capitol", "Tarpeian Rock".

Patricians. The word "patricians" describes the ruling class in ancient Rome, as opposed to the plebs or plebeians. Patricians were the descendants of the original citizens, whereas the plebs, plebeians, or commoners were the descendants of those who joined the community later. Patricians had the monopoly of priestly offices, had the exclusive right of interpreting the law and giving decisions and alone were eligible for the republician magistrates, while the senate was recruited almost exclusively from amongst the patricians. A long and bitter struggle was waged by the plebeians to break down these privileges. This was at last successful and from about 300 B.C. the patricians survived only

as an aristocracy of birth. In *Coriolanus*, Marcius, Menenius, Cominius, Volumina, Virgilia, Valeria and all the members of the senate belong to the class of patricians. The attitude of all of them, and especially of Marcius, is very contemptuous towards the plebeians.

Plebeians. "Plebeians" (or "plebs") were the common people of ancient Rome, as opposed to the ruling order of patricians. The plebeians were originally the subject peoples, resident aliens, and even fugitive slaves ; but, as time went on, and many of them attained to wealth and influence, they demanded some share of the political power which the patricians kept in their own hands. The struggle lasted more than 200 years. In 494 B.C., the plebeians gained the right to elect special magistrates of their own, called tribunes. In *Coriolanus*, there is a reference to this concession granted to the plebeians. Talking to Menenius, Marcius says that a petition has been granted to the mutinous crowd. Menenius asks what concession has been granted to them, and Marcius replies, "Five tribunes to defend their vulgar wisdoms of their own choice : one's Junius Brutus, Sicinius Velutus, and I know not—", and he goes on to express his strong disapproval of this concession. The action of the play *Coriolanus* covers the period from 494 B.C. to 490 B.C. It was in 494 B.C. that the plebeians gained the right to elect their tribunes. In the play we find the plebeians and their tribunes soon becoming so powerful as to be able to banish Marcius from Rome in opposition to the wishes of the whole patrician class and the whole senate. This is how a citizen in the opening scene of the play expresses the attitude of the patricians towards the commoners : "They ne'er cared for us yet : suffer us to famish, and their store-houses crammed with grain ; make edicts for usury, to support usurers ; repeal daily any wholesome act established against the rich, and provide more piercing statutes daily to chain up and restrain the poor. If the wars eat us not up, they will ; and there's all the love they bear us". There is much bitterness in this speech. The citizens, indeed, are so bitter towards Marcius that they are ready to kill him.

Tribunes. The tribunes were high military and civil officers in ancient Rome. In *Coriolanus*, we are concerned with tribunes of the people only, that is, with civil officers or

magistrates. Originally, the tribunes were appointed from amongst the patricians only; but in 494 B.C., the plebeians succeeded in winning the right to elect from among themselves two tribunes to protect the plebeians against arbitrary action on the part of the patricians. The number was raised to five, and then in 457 B.C. to ten. With the passing of time, the tribunes became more and more powerful. In *Coriolanus*, Brutus and Sicinius are the first two tribunes who were elected by the plebeians in 494 B.C. We find them already so powerful as to succeed in their plot against a formidable patrician, Marcius. The tribunes are able to instigate and inflame the plebeians and succeed in banishing Marcius. They, indeed, have a firm grip on the plebeians and find it possible to control their actions.

Aediles. Aediles were Roman officials who assisted the tribunes. In republican times, their duties were the superintendence of public buildings and of the water supply, direction of the police, provisions of the city, management of public games, and care of the public archives. Like the tribunes, the aediles were also first instituted in 494 B.C. and were at first only two in number.

Volscians. Volscians or Volsces were the people of ancient Italy, of unknown origin. Their territory, the extent of which varied from time to time, lay on both sides of the river Liris, in central Italy. They were finally subdued by the Romans in 338 B.C.

Antium. Antium was one of the oldest cities and ports of Lantium, the modern Anzio. It stood 33 miles south-east of Rome, and was a stronghold of the Volscians. Conquered by Rome in 468 B.C., it revolted, and was finally subdued in 338 B.C.

Consul. The consuls in ancient Rome were two in number (though in *Coriolanus* only one is mentioned). The consuls were elected by popular vote, and held office for one year. The consuls convoked the senate and presided over its meetings. They were in supreme command of the military forces of the republic, and also exercised certain judicial functions. They were preceded by attendants called "lictors".

Senate. The senate in the ancient Roman republic was a powerful organ, the membership of which was open for a long

time only to patricians. The number of senators varied from 300 in the early times to 1000 in the time of Julius Caesar. The senate had large administrative and legislative powers.

Forum. The word "forum" in ancient Rome was used for the open space lying between the Palatine and Capitoline hills. Here the assembly of the people met ; here magistrates and others addressed the people. Adjoining the forum were the senate-house and the temples of Julius and Vesta.

Capitol. "Capitol" was the general name for the Capitoline Hill, one of the seven hills of ancient Rome. A temple of Jupiter was erected on this hill and in a restricted sense the word "capitol" was used for the temple alone. Its southern extremity ended in the Tarpeian rock. On the Capitoline hill were many other temples and statues of deities. (Now-a-days the word "capitol" is used for the seat of the Congress of the U.S.A. at Washington, D.C.)

Tarpeian Rock. The name of a cliff on the Capitoline Hill ; it was named after Tarpeia, daughter of a governor of the citadel on the Capitoline hill. Tarpeia proved a traitor to the garrison of her father's fort and died a wretched death. The memory of her wickedness was perpetuated in the name of the cliff on the Capitoline Hill. The cliff came to be known as the Tarpeian rock and those charged with treason were hurled down to death from that rock. The tribunes in *Coriolanus* at first suggest that Marcius, a traitor to Rome, should be thrown down the Tarpeian rock, though subsequently they are content with banishing him.

5. A General Commentary on, Or A Critical Appreciation Of, *Coriolanus*

Based on Plutarch's *Lives* : The play *Coriolanus* deals with a period (494 B.C. to 490 B.C.) of ancient Roman history and is based on the narrative in Plutarch's *Lives* as translated into English by Sir Thomas North. Shakespeare has followed his source closely, though in some places he transposes the order of events and moulds his material to suit the needs of the dramatic form. There are in the play examples of a compression of the material, of an omission of certain matters, and of a few additions to the material. In each case, the justification lies in the compactness or concentration of effect that has

been achieved in the play. But, on the whole, Shakespeare has followed the narrative of Plutarch with great fidelity and has, in addition to that, employed the very language of North's translation in certain passages (for instance, in Act V scene iii lines 94-148 where Volumnia pleads to her son for mercy to Rome).

Plot construction. There is one single plot in this play, namely, the rise and fall of the hero, Caius Marcius. There are no sub-plots in the play, and therefore no complexity of any kind in the the construction of the plot. There are two movements in the play ; first, the fame and glory won by Caius Marcius. his election to the consulship, and his banishment ; second, Caius Marcius's rise to power once again, though this time in the service of a foreign government hostile to his native Rome, his march into Roman territory and his threat to destroy Rome, his surrender to his mother's wishes, his return to the Volscian capital, his impeachment by Aufidius, and his assassination. Thus, the play falls into two parts, Caius Marcius dominating in both. Throughout the play our attention is focussed upon Coriolanus who is the central figure and with whom the play primarily deals. Thus the play possesses a perfect unity of plot, or a unity of action. But the other two unities, the unity of time and the unity of place, have not been observed. We are taken from Rome to Corioli, from Corioli back to Rome, from Rome to Antium, and so on. As for time, the play covers a period of 4 years from 494 B.C. to 490 B.C.

Characterization. Shakespeare shows his usual mastery of human nature and his understanding of human character in the drawing of the various figures in this play. Each individual is sketched in a most realistic and convincing manner. Each portrait is drawn with unforgettable vividness. Coriolanus, with his towering pride, his egoism, his contempt for the people and his military glory, dominates the whole play. The virtues of his character are as effectively revealed to us as faults and flaws. His reverential attitude to his mother, his tender affection for his wife and child, his modesty and impatience of all praise, his contempt for the spoils of war, are the good qualities which win him our sympathy and admiration, as against his pride and his contempt for the people which constitute the tragic flaw and which bring about his downfall.

Volumnia, the Roman matron, with her delight in battle, with her hold upon her son, with her imperious and commanding personality, and with her patriotic fervour is also made to live before us. Nor can we forget Virgilia who, though she speaks hardly fifty lines in the play, leaves a permanent impression of gentleness and tenderness upon our minds. Menenius, the delightful old man, honest, shrewd, witty, having an attitude of hero worship towards Coriolanus is another unforgettable character. Likewise, the tribunes, as also Cominius and Aufidius, have been drawn with a sureness of touch and with an insight.

Dramatic scenes. The interest of the reader or the audience is fully maintained throughout the play of *Coriolanus*, There is considerable excitement and tension in the course of the play, and the reader breathlessly witnesses one development after another. The play opens with an exciting scene which shows the Roman mob ready to strike at the patricians with Marcius as their special target. When this excitement subsides, we are taken to the battle-field where the fluctuating fortunes of war are depicted, and where Marcius distinguishes himself by his extraordinary fearlessness and valour. After another lull, we are excited when the crowd is instigated by the tribunes against Coriolanus This part of the play ends with the dramatic scene of the tribunes pronouncing the sentence first of death and then of banishment on Coriolanus who storms with rage and fury but who has to submit to the sentence. We have probably the most dramatic scene in the interview of Coriolanus and his mother ending in Coriolanus's surrender to his mother's wish. Then comes the final scene, also highly dramatic, in which Marcius is assassinated. Thus the play provides all the thrills that we can expect from a successful drama.

Shakespeare's treatment of the Roman mob. It has been said that Shakespeare shows his anti-democratic sympathies in the manner in which he has depicted the Roman mob in this play. The mob has been depicted as ignorant, cowardly, fickle-minded, lacking in judgment and almost stupid. Caius Marcius expresses his contempt for the Roman mob every time he meets them. Even Menenius, a good-natured patrician though he is, calls the commoners cowardly and foolish. A critic has said that this

play is "a mine of insults to the people." But it would be unfair to identify Shakespeare's political views with the political attitude of Caius Marcius or that of Menenius. Nor would it be true to say that the Roman mob has been depicted in the blackest colours. After all, the worst charges against the Roman mob are those of fickleness and passionate enmity towards the patricians in general, and towards Coriolanus in particular. But there are substantial grounds for their enmity. The people have been facing a famine and the patricians have done nothing to afford them relief. Coriolanus has always treated the people contemptuously ; he has been a "very dog to the commonalty." In spite of their hostility, the people elect Coriolanus to be their consul, thus showing not a lack of judgment but a proper appreciation of Coriolanus's valour and his services to the country. If subsequently they turn against Coriolanus, it is because of the advice and the exhortation of their tribunes in whom they have confidence and who remind them of Coriolanus's callousness towards the people. Besides, Roman history by no means represents the people as very intelligent or very wise at any period ; nor did English history provide any evidence that the common people were very wise. It was, therefore, not possible for Shakespeare to show any great respect for the democratic spirit. We cannot, therefore, accuse Shakespeare of having grossly mis-represented the Roman mob, though we can say that Shakespeare did not have much sympathy with the democratic attitude

Prevailing mood or atmosphere : *Coriolanus* belongs to the later third period of Shakespeare's dramatic activity, and shares the mood of the "dramas of despair" written then. Human nature is shown in them as pitiful, and there is a scarcely a character that claims our full sympathy. Shakespeare had passed through a period of pessimism, and its influence is powerful in *Coriolanus*. The prevailing atmosphere is one of gloom, bitterness, disillusionment, disgust, and cynicism. Coriolanus's infirmities of character mar his virtues ; Aufidius's valour is poisoned by his dishonourable revenge upon Coriolanus ; the tribunes are a pair of unmeriting and base fellows ; the people are fickle-minded, foolish, and brutal ; the patricians are weak and spineless and are easily cowed by the people; in short, a hopeless picture of human nature emerges

from a reading of the play.

Style. Shakespeare shows his usual mastery of the language in writing this play, his gift for original word-combinations, word-coinages, his felicities of phrase, and his command of rhetoric. *Coriolanus* abounds in rhetoric speeches. The speeches of the tribunes to the Roman mob; the abusive utterances, fulminations, and vituperative speeches of Coriolanus; Aufidius's impeachment of Coriolanus and Coriolanus's defiant words—these are various examples of the rhetorical effects that have been achieved in the play. The effects gained are volcanic, rather than beautiful, "sudden explosions of sublimity or pathos," as Bradley calls them. There is a great variation of level in the play ; passages almost of flatness are followed by outbursts of quick and daring metaphor. There are several passages, too, which give us a peep into human nature and are full of worldly wisdom. These passages include Aufidius's vow to take his revenge upon Marcius ; Volumnia's advice to her son to temper his pride with diplomacy ; Volumnia's speech in which she describes the verdict of posterity in case Coriolanus destroys Rome ; and Coriolanus's speech in which he describes how bosom friends may suddenly turn enemies and vice versa.

Verse and prose. The greater part of the dialogue in *Coriolanus* is written in blank verse. Rhyme has been used only for some special effect as Act II, scene iii lines 105—116 where Coriolanus is moralising on his position as a candidate. Shakespeare sometimes rounds off a scene or speech with rhyme (Act V, scene vi lines 153—4). But, on the whole, rhyme has been very sparingly used. Scenes or passages in prose are, however, fairly common. Prose has been used in scenes which are more or less comic or familiar such as Act I, scene iii ; Act II, scene i ; Act IV, scene iii.

What critics have to say about *Coriolanus*. "A loftier or more perfect piece of work was never done in all the world than this tragedy of Coriolanus", said Swinburne about Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*. For Hudson, this play represents Shakespeare's "highest maturity of thought and power." Bradley places the play beside the great tragedies of *Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *Othello*. Middleton Murry talks about its "economy, its swiftness, it solidity, its astonishing clarity

and poignancy of language" and calls it a "magnificent example of creative control." Most critics have tended, however, to judge the play for its political significance rather than as a work of art. Coleridge, for instance, says that it illustrates "the wonderfully philosophic impartiality of Shakespeare's politics." Hazlitt writes : "Anyone who studies it may save himself the trouble of reading Burke's *Reflections* or Paine's *Rights of Man* or the debates in both Houses of Parliament since the French Revolution. The arguments for and against aristocracy or democracy, on the privileges of the few and the claims of the many, on liberty and slavery, power and the abuse of it, peace and war, are very ably handled, with the spirit of a poet and the acuteness of a philosopher." And John Palmer writes thus about this play : "It has the boldness and simplicity of a classic monument. It commands respect for its weight and substance, for the impression it gives of being determined in its form by the material of which it is wrought, for an asceticism which rejects all superfluous ornament. It is a composition without light or shade. It stands, as it were, in the public square. We can walk round it, admire its proportions, acknowledge the mastery of the hand that gave it shape, see it completely for what it is without any tremulous reaching out of the spirit to something that lies beyond. It is, in a word, a work of art which is affirmative, self-explicit, harmonious, and entirely consistent."

6. A DETAILED SUMMARY OF THE PLAY

Act 1

Scene i. The play opens with a crowd of Roman citizens armed with staves, clubs, and other weapons, in a mutinous mood, full of anger and hatred against the patricians as a class, and against Caius Marcius as an individual member of that class. The people of Rome are facing a corn famine and they feel that the patricians are doing nothing to afford them relief. They are out to revenge themselves on the patricians whose own stores, they think, are full of grains. Their anger is patricularly directed against Caius Marcius who, in their opinion, is the chief enemy of the people" and "a very dog to the commonalty " They recognise the services which Caius Marcius has rendered to the country but they believe that what he did for the country was done" to please

his mother and to be partly proud." They are willing to honour him for his valour, but they cannot tolerate his pride and arrogance any more.

Menenius Agrippa appears on the scene and tries to pacify the mutinous crowd. The crowd feels much respect for this patrician whose love for the people and whose honesty they fully recognise. With him the citizens are ready to discuss matters in good faith. They have no quarrel with a noble Roman who has a decent regard for their interests. Menenius tells them that the patricians are like fathers to the commoners and that the responsibility for the famine rests upon the gods and not upon the patricians. The citizens are not convinced by this argument and they charge the patricians not only with indifference but callousness towards the commoners. Menenius replies with his famous fable of the belly and the other members of the human body. He tells them that, on one occasion, all the body's members rebelled against the belly and accused it of swallowing all the food without doing anything and without exerting itself in any way. The belly replied, Menenius goes on to say, that it was only a store-house of the whole body and that it supplied nourishment to all other organs and members of the body. Menenius compares the senators and the patricians of Rome to the serviceable belly, and the mutinous citizens of Rome to the rebellious members of the human body.

Caius Marcius comes upon the scene as Menenius concludes his fable. Seeing the mutinous crowd, Caius Marcius administers a severe rebuke to them. He calls them "dissentious rogues" and accuses them of cowardice, ignorance, inconstancy, lack of judgment, stupidity, etc. It is sheer foolishness on their part, says Caius Marcius to them, to think that the patricians have enough grains or that the patricians wish to starve the commoners. Marcius also informs Menenius that he has already scattered the rebellious crowd in the other part of the city after they had been granted their petition to have tribunes of their own choice to safeguard their interests. After Marcius has rebuked this crowd of citizens, they disperse.

A messenger now brings the news that the Volscians

are up in arms against Rome. The messenger is immediately followed by Cominius, Titus Lartius and other Senators and by the two tribunes, Brutus and Scinius. Marcius informs them that the Volscians are commanded by a general by the name of Tullus Aufidius who is a man of undoubted valour. He goes on to say that, if he were not Marcuis, he would wish to be Tullus Aufidius. He adds that, if Aufidius were on his side in the war, he would go over to the other side for the sheer pleasure of fighting so excellent a soldier. The Volscian war is like a Heaven-sent opportunity to Marcius to increase his glory and also a chance for him to get even with the rabble of Rome. It is decided that Cominius should command the Roman forces and that Caius Marcius and Titus Lartius should attend upon Cominius.

This opening scene ends with a dialogue between Sicinius and Brutus. The two tribunes criticise Marcius for being proud and for his contempt towards them. Brutus suggests that Marcius, in agreeing to serve under Cominius, has been prompted by a desire to escape blame if things go wrong in the war, and to claim all the glory if the war brings victory to Rome. This suggestion of Brutus is, however, untrue, because Marcius has not accepted the post of Second-in-Command with the deliberate design of advancing himself at the expense of his Commander. In any case, it is clear from the dialogue of the tribunes that both of them feel a deep hatred for Caius Marcius.

Scene ii. The scene shifts from Rome to Corioli. We meet Tullus Aufidius and the Senators of Corioli who are in conference to discuss their expedition against Rome. Aufidius expresses his regret and disappointment that the Senate of Corioli has not been able to maintain proper secrecy with regard to their plans of attacking Rome. Aufidius has received information about the famine in Rome, the discontent of the people, and the despatch of Roman forces under Cominius, Marcuis and Lartius to fight against the Volscians. Aufidius is then asked by the Senate to take his commission and hurry to his troops, leaving Corioli to its own resources for its defence in case of a Roman attack on the city.

Scene iii. We are taken back to Rome, to Marcius's house. Volumnia, the mother of Marcius, and Virgilia, the wife of Marcius, are shown busy sewing and talking. Virgilia is feeling sad because of her husband's absence. Volumnia, who loves wars, is glad that her son has got another chance to win glory on the battle-field. Volumnia thinks first of her son's glory; Virgilia thinks first of her husband's peril. Volumnia pictures her son in the battle-field, fighting bravely and rallying his troops. Virgilia feels none of Volumnia's delight in butchery, and prays for her husband's safety. Valeria, a patrician lady, comes on a visit to Volumnia and Virgilia. Valeria urges the two ladies to lay aside their stitchery and to go out of doors with her. Virgilia begs to be excused. She has no heart for company while her husband is away to the wars. Valeria teases her in a good-natured manner. Volumnia is impatient and dictatorial. She wants Virgilia not to confine herself indoors. But Virgilia does not yield on this point and refuses to leave the house. There is also in this scene a reference to Marcius's little son. Volumnia says that the boy is more interested in seeing the swords and hearing the drums than in studies. Valeria describes how she saw the boy chasing a butterfly and tearing it into pieces after catching it. Valeria calls him a noble child, but Virgilia modestly calls him a "crack".

Scenes iv to ix. These six scenes depict the course of the Volscian war and are packed with the incidents of that war. These scenes show Marcius in his proper element. We see him first before Corioli. The Romans have been beaten back from the walls of the city. Marcius rallies the Roman troops, leads them to the gates of the city, gets himself shut in alone with his enemies, fights his way out, and captures the city. The Roman soldiers get busy plundering the town with Marcius bitterly commenting on their greed and baseness. Leaving Corioli in the charge of Titus Lartius, Marcius hurries to the field where Cominius, hard pressed by the Volscians, has retreated. Marcius informs Cominius about his conquest of Corioli and then seeks permission to attack Aufidius and his forces without delay. Cominius would wish Marcius to rest and to have his wounds attended to before he launches another attack, but seeing Marcius's impatience and keenness

he gives the permission. Marcius makes a brief inspiring speech to the troops and selects the best and the bravest among them to accompany him in his attack upon the forces of Aufidius. Marcius meets Aufidius in single combat. The fight is, however, interrupted, and Aufidius flees from the battle-field. Marcius rejoins Cominius who pays a tribute to Marcius on the latter's bravery in fighting. He promises to report Marcius's heroic fighting to the Senate. Titus Lartius also expresses his ardent admiration for Marcius. Marcius, however, speaks modestly about his exploits and says that he has done nothing more than any other Roman patriot. Cominius offers him a tenth of the captured treasure but he refuses to accept, "a bribe to pay his sword," and insists on taking no more than his common share with the soldiers. He is saluted by the soldiers with a flourish of trumpets but he says that it is a misuse of the drums and trumpets to be employed for purposes of flattery. He expresses his impatience with the extravagant praise that is being offered to him and, when the soldiers shout his name with the title of Coriolanus, he abruptly announces, "I will go wash." Then he remembers the man who had given him shelter in Corioli and pleads with Cominius for mercy to that man, thus showing the human side of his character.

Scene x. At the Volscian camp, Tullus Aufidius confesses to a sense of shame in having lost Corioli and having been beaten in single combat by Marcius. Aufidius takes a vow to kill Marcius by fair means or foul. So far as Marcius is concerned, Aufidius can no longer put honour first. In this case, revenge must come first even at the cost of honour. "Nor sleep, nor sanctuary, being naked, sick nor fane, nor Capitol, the prayers of priests nor times of sacrifice shall lift up their rotten privilege and custom against my hate to Marcius", says Aufidius. The violence of Aufidius's hatred is, indeed, terrifying.

Act II

Scene i. Rome is waiting for news. Menenius and his friends, hoping for victory, intend to make good use of it. They would like to see Marcius elected to consulship. The tribunes, Brutus and Sicinius, are getting ready to face a troublesome situation. For Rome they desire success in arms, but they fear what it may mean for the liberties of the people. If Marcius

be elected consul by a popular vote cast in the moment of his triumph, the concessions so recently won from the Senate will be rendered worthless. Meanwhile, they must patiently endure the taunting remarks of Menenius. Menenius is out to enjoy himself. His friend Marcius is at the wars and is likely to bring home fresh honours. He will be absolute with these fellows but without any ill-will. He has little taste for their company and he says so. He calls them a pair of "unmeriting, proud, violent, and testy magistrates". He does not like their faces and says that they are ambitious for poor knaves' caps and legs. He accuses them of spending a whole morning in a vain effort to settle a dispute. He says that Marcius is worth all their predecessors since the Flood. Brutus and Sicinius take all this in a spirit of toleration. Brutus does make a retort, "Come, come, you are well understood to be a perfecter giber for the table than a necessary bencher in the Capitol", but it is brief and not very offensive.

Volumnia, Virgilia and Valeria appear on the scene. Volumnia discloses that Marcius has won a victory in the Volscian war and is now returning home. Menenius is delighted to hear the news and to learn that Menenius has received two wounds in the recent campaign, thus making a total of twenty seven wounds on his person. Marcius enters. The trumpet sounds. The herald proclaims the new title of "Coriolanus" earned by Marcius but Marcius expresses a wish not to be praised and flattered. He kneels before his mother and greets his wife with tenderness. Volumnia expresses the hope that Rome will elect him consul. The Senators including Marcius now move to the Capitol, while the tribunes remain behind to discuss the situation. Brutus speaks of the warmth and cordiality of the people towards Marcius. Sicinius expresses the fear that that the people will elect Marcius to the consulship. The only hope of the tribunes is that the people will remember Marcius's pride and arrogance. They make up their minds to suggest to the people in what hatred Marcius has always held them.

Scene ii. At a meeting of the Senate, Cominius describes in detail the brave deeds of Marcius in the past and during the recent Volscian War. "He was a thing of blood," says Cominius with reference to Marcius's fight during the Volscian

war. The Senators announce their decision to choose Marcius for the consulship and advise him to seek the votes of the people. Marcius appeals to them to allow him to omit the custom of seeking the votes of the people in the traditional manner. The tribunes insist that the laws of the country should be respected and Menenius urges Marcius to conform to the established custom as his predecessors have done before him.

Scene iii. Coriolanus, wearing the gown of humility, comes to the forum to seek the votes of the people for the consulship. He has not been able to escape from the established custom of seeking the popular vote and he follows the custom much against his will. He asks for the votes of the citizens in a sarcastic, bantering tone. The people, much impressed by his recent exploits, are willing to elect him to the consulship, but they expect an assurance of goodwill from him and a promise that he will look after their interests. Marcius replies to this demand with mockery and ridicule. The people feel hurt by what he says but they display an admirable indulgence under extreme provocation and promise him their votes against their better judgment. Marcius leaves the forum for the Senate-house to claim and to enjoy the consulship. The tribunes, however, are not happy at what has happened. They address the people and express their disapproval of the people's support to Marcius. They urge the people to revoke the election, reminding them that Marcius has always been an enemy to their interests. The tribunes are successful in their effort to inflame the people against Marcius, and the people agree to revoke the election.

Act III

Scene i. Marcius learns from Lartius that Aufidius has retired to Antium in a state of disappointment. Marcius expresses the wish that he could go to Antium to fight Aufidius. The Senators and Marcius are on their way to the forum when the tribunes stop them and announce that the temper of the citizens has changed and that they are incensed against Marcius. Marcius accuses the tribunes of having brought about this change. "Have you not set them on"? asks Marcius of the tribunes, and Cominius adds, "You are like to do such business". "It is a purposed thing, and grows by

plot," says Marcius. The tribunes, however, do not accept any responsibility in the matter and in reply to the angry allegations of Marcius, say :

"You speak o' the people,
As if you were a god to punish, not
A man of their infirmity."

Marcius addresses the senators and points out the dangers of allowing the commoners to have their way. He warns the senators that there will be confusion in the city if they go on yielding to the will of the commoners. Sicinius says that the people will be duly informed of Marcius's anti-democratic speech. Marcius calls Sicinius "Triton of his minnows" and criticizes him for his absolute use of the word "shall". Addressing the Senators, Marcius calls them good but most unwise and reckless. He calls upon them to wake up from their slumber and not to allow the tribunes to usurp the authority of the senators. Brutus says that the people cannot support for consulship a man who opposed the proposal to distribute corn free to the people. Marcius says that the people did not deserve free corn because of their cowardice in refusing to fight for their country and because of their mutinies and revolts at a time when the country was faced with danger. Marcius goes on to speak in the same vein emphasising the need to curb the growing power of the people. Brutus comments that Marcius has said enough. Sicinius remarks that Marcius has spoken like a traitor and shall answer as traitors do. Marcius uses abusive language for the tribunes. Sicinius sends an official to summon the people and declares that he is going to arrest Marcius whom he calls a "traitorous innovator," and a foe to the public weal. Marcius calls Sicinius an "old goat" and "rotten thing", and declares that he will shake the bones of Sicinius out of his garments. The rabble of citizens appears at this point. Brutus calls upon the officials to seize Marcius. The citizens shout, "Down with him ! Down with him !" There is confusion. Sicinius addresses the crowd and tells them that Marcius wishes to deprive them of their liberties and declares that Marcius deserves death and should be seized to be thrown down to destruction from the Tarpeian rock. Brutus supports this proposal. Marcius is asked to yield to arrest. Marcius draws his sword. Again there is confusion. The tribunes, the

officials, and the people are pushed back in the scuffle. Marcius, Cominius and some others withdraw from the scene. Menenius and a few other patricians remain there. Brutus and Sicinius, accompanied by the crowd reappear. Menenius tries to plead with the tribunes and urges them to keep the peace. Sicinius says that Marcius shall be thrown down the Tarpeian rock with "rigorous hands" and calls Marcius a viperous traitor." Menenius urges that Rome should not prove ungrateful to her bravest son. Sicinius says that Marcius is a disease that must be cut off from the body of Rome. Menenius pleads that Rome should not forget that Marcius has many times shed his blood for his country. Menenius offers to bring Marcius to face the crowd and to answer the charges against him. This offer is accepted and it is decided that Marcius should appear before the crowd at the market-place in order to explain his conduct.

Scene ii. Coriolanus is speaking to the patricians in his house. He is not sorry to have spoken in a haughty manner to the tribunes and to the people. He is prepared to face all the consequences. His mother Volumnia enters and expresses her disapproval of the way in which he has behaved towards the crowd and towards the tribunes. Menenius comes with the senators. Menenius too disapproves of Marcius's roughness in dealing with the people and urges him to go back to them to make amend for his roughness. Marcius, however, does not budge from his position. Volumnia adds her appeal to Menenius's advice. She urges him to speak to the crowd in gentle tones even if, in order to do so, he has to put on false airs of modesty and humility. She then asks him to go to them bare-headed and to kneel before them. Marcius cannot agree to humble himself before the crowd. Thereupon Volumnia speaks to him in anger and says that she will leave him to his own obstinacy and pride. Marcius cannot bear to alienate his mother. He surrenders to her wish and agrees to go and appease the people.

Scene iii. The two tribunes are talking to each other and discussing their plans with regard to Coriolanus. Sicinius bids an aedile go and instruct the crowd to support Sicinius in whatever proposal he may make for the punishment of Marcius. Coriolanus accompanied with senators and patricians appears.

A crowd of citizens also arrive. Sicinius calls upon Coriolanus to submit to the wishes of the people. Menenius urges the crowd not to mistake Coriolanus's rough manner of speaking as showing any illwill towards the people. Coriolanus's roughness, says Menenius, is just the roughness of a soldier. Coriolanus asks the crowd why, after having elected him to the consulship, they now wish to withdraw their support to him. Sicinius asserts that Coriolanus has tried to set himself up as a dictator and that he has proved a traitor to the people. Instead of replying to this charge and instead of reasoning with the people, Coriolanus at once loses his temper at the use of the word "traitor" for him. He becomes abusive and defiant. Sicinius says that this kind of behaviour deserves, "extremest death". Coriolanus declares that he is not prepared to speak one single gentle word to buy the mercy of the people and the tribunes. Sicinius accuses Coriolanus of tyranny and of resistance to law. He declares that, in view of Coriolanus's past services to the country, the sentence of death should be reduced to banishment from the city of Rome. The citizens shout their support for this verdict. Cominius tries to intervene but the tribunes announce that there is no more to be said and that Corioanus is banished as an enemy to the people and to his country. Coriolanus feels enraged beyond measure. He utters curses on the people and the tribunes, telling them that he has nothing but hatred for them and that he will quit the city because there is a lot of room for him elsewhere. The citizens follow him to see him out at the gates of the city.

Act IV

Scene i. Coriolanus is preparing to depart from the city of Rome. A large number of patricians have gathered at the gate to bid farewell to him. Coriolanus tries to soothe his mother and his wife who feel woe-begone. Volumnia utters a curse upon all the trades and occupations in Rome. Coriolanus tries to comfort his mother and says, "Nay, mother, where is your ancient courage?" To Cominius, he says, "Droop not; adieu." He tries to cheer up the old and true Menenius. He turns from one to the other, urging them all not to feel so sad. Cominius asks him to keep in touch with his friends in Rome so that they are able to inform him when the situation improves.

Menenius says that if he were younger he would have accompanied Coriolanus into exile.

Scene ii. Volumnia, Virgilia, and Menenius are on their way back to the city after bidding farewell to Coriolanus. They happen to meet the tribunes on the way. Volumnia gives to the tribunes a bit of her mind. She curses the tribunes for having ignored the services of her son to the country. She accuses them of having incensed the ignorant and foolish citizens. She says that her son surpasses the people and the tribunes as much as does the Capitol surpass the meanest house in Rome. "I would the gods had nothing else to do but to confirm by curses !" says Volumnia, as the tribunes move away. She then asks Virgilia to give up her faint lamentations and to lament in anger, "Juno-like."

Scene iii. A Roman, working as a spy for the Volscians, meets a Volsce on a highway between Rome and Antium The Roman has brought news for the Volscian authorities about recent events in Rome. According to him, the nobles have taken to heart the banishment of the worthy Coriolanus and would, if possible, take away all power from the people and dismiss their tribunes. The Volsce talks about the state of affairs in his country and says that his state is in a most war like preparation and that their charges are ready to attack at an hour's notice. The Roman says that the noble Tullus Aufidius will now be able to distinguish himself in the war because his great opposer, Coriolanus, will no longer fight for his country.

Scene iv. Coriolanus, wearing mean clothes and disguised, enters the city of Antium where he formerly fought and killed many a citizen. He has decided to call at the house of Aufidius in order to make peace with him. In a soliloquy he reflects upon the changing nature of human relationships. Friends, who have sworn their loyalty to each other and who are inseparable in love, are likely to become the bitterest enemies of each other over a small matter. Sworn enemies, on the other hand, may grow dear friends. Once Coriolanus hated this town where he has now come to take shelter and to reach a compromise with his bitterest enemies.

Scene v. Coriolanus, still disguished, appears at the house of Aufidius. A serving-man asks him who he is and what his business is. Coriolanus pushes away the serving-man from him whereupon the second serving-man goes and brings his master Aufidius to deal with the strange visitor. Coriolanus reveals himself to Aufidius, tells him of the way he has been treated by his country, offers to join Aufidius in a fresh Volscian attack upon Rome, promises to fight, "against his canker'd country with spleen of all the under fiends." In case the offer is not acceptable to Aufidius, Coriolanus is ready to die at the hands of his former enemy. Aufidius receives Coriolanus with open arms and great joy. He twines his arms around Coriolanus and says that he is more delighted to meet Marcius than he was on seeing his bride first enter his house. Even if there were no other reason for him to lead a fresh campaign against Rome, he would do so to avenge the banishment of Marcius. Aufidius offers to Marcius the command of half of his troops and allows him freedom to use his own strategy in leading the campaign against Rome. "A thousand welcomes and more a friend than ever an enemy" says Aufidius to Marcius and warmly takes him by the hand. This scene concludes with some shrewd commentary by the servants on this unexpected alliance between Coriolanus and Aufidius. One of the servants describes the reception of Marcius by the Senators of Antium in the following manner : "Why, he is so made on here within, as if he were son and heir to Mars; set at upper end o' the table; no question asked him by any of the senators, but they stand bald before him : Our general himself makes a mistress of him; sanctifies himself with's hand and turns up the white of the eye to his discourse. But the bottom of the news is, our general is cut i' the middle, and but one half of what he was yesterday ; for the other has half by the entreaty and grant of the whole table." In other words Marcius has been received by his enemies with great warmth and affection. The same servant also says that Marcius will now take his full revenge upon the Romans and that the campaign is to begin on the very next day. Another servant feels happy because "we shall have a stirring world again. This peace is nothing, but to rust iron, increase and bread ballad-makers." The first servant agrees and says that peace is something lethargic, sleepy and insensible, and that it makes men

hate one another. The third servant points out that during peace men need one another less.

Scene vi. In Rome, the two tribunes, Sicinius and Brutus, are expressing their feeling of satisfaction to one another at the happy state of affairs in the city. Menenius appears and is kindly greeted by the tribunes who tell him that Coriolanus is not much missed by the people of Rome and that the Commonwealth stands firm and stable in his absence. Three or four citizens come, and there is an affectionate change of greetings between them and the tribunes. Sicinius expresses the view that this is a happier time than before when the people used to run about in the streets in a mutinous mood. Brutus says that Caius Marcius was a worthy officer in the war but insolent, ambitious and self-loving. A messenger brings the news that Marcius has joined Aufidius and is leading an army in order to take his revenge upon the Roman people. Menenius cannot believe that Marcius could join his bitterest enemy, Aufidius. The second messenger, however, confirms the news and says that a fearful army, led by Caius Marcius and Aufidius, is working havoc on Roman territory. Cominius comes with more news. Marcius has not only joined the Volscians but has become their god. Marcius leads the Volscians like a thing, "made by some other deity than nature." All the regions belonging to Rome have smilingly surrendered to Marcius ; and those who are resisting him are being destroyed. Menenius and Cominius put all the blame on the two tribunes. Menenius says to them, "You have made good work, you and your apron-men" ; while Cominius says, "You have brought a trembling upon Rome, such as was never so incapable of help." A crowd of citizens appear. Menenius scolds the citizens for having banished Coriolanus and tells them that Rome fully deserves the destruction with which Rome is now threatened. The citizens recall that, in banishing Marcius, they were in two minds. "That we did, we did for the best ; though we willingly consented to his banishment; yet it was against our will." This is a bad moment for Brutus and Sicinius ; but they manage to soothe the crowd and to disperse them.

Scene vii. The Volsican forces are encamped at a small distance from Rome. Aufidius is talking to his lieutenant and informs him that the Volscian soldiers have become very devoted

to Marcius and treat him as their very god. Aufidius now begins to feel jealous of Marcius to whom he has willingly given the command of half of his troops. However, Aufidius is quite hopeful of soon pushing Marcius into the background. The lieutenant asks whether Coriolanus will conquer Rome. Aufidius says that the nobility, the senators and patricians of Rome love Marcius and that even the people will quickly offer their support to him. Aufidius goes on to analyse Marcius's faults which were responsible for Marcius's banishment. His pride, defect of judgment, and nature combined to make Marcius feared, then hated and finally banished. Aufidius is confident that when Marcius has conquered Rome, Aufidius will be able to weaken the authority of Marcius. "When, Rome is thine, thou poorest of all : then shortly art thou mine."

ACT V

Scene i. The Volscian forces commanded by Aufidius and Coriolanus have encamped at some distance from Rome. Rome is threatened with destruction if the city does not yield. Cominius has already failed in his mission of dissuading Coriolanus from carrying out his resolve to destroy and burn Rome. Cominius pleaded to Coriolanus in the name of their old association and in the name of the blood they together shed in the wars. But Coriolanus remained unmoved. The tribunes now ask Menenius to go and meet Coriolanus in an attempt to save Rome. Menenius is unwilling to accept this proposal in view of the coldness with which Coriolanus received the man who had once been his commander, namely, Cominius. But the tribunes urge Menenius in the name of their country and appeal to him to use his good offices with Coriolanus. Menenius yields to the pressure of the tribunes and says, "I'll undertake't : I think he'll hear me." Menenius will meet Coriolanus at a time when the latter is in a mood to forgive, that is, when the latter has just risen from the dinner table. Perhaps Cominius met Coriolanus when Coriolanus had not dined. "But when we have stuff'd these pipes and these conveyances of our blood with wine and feeding, we have suppler souls than in our priest-like fasts : therefore I'll watch him till he be dieted to my request, and then I'll set upon him", says Menenius. Cominius, however, is doubtful whether Coriolanus will listen to Menenius. Cominius has not forgotten

how Coriolanus dismissed him with a "speechless hand," even though Cominius had knelt before Coriolanus in order to beg for mercy to Rome.

Scene ii. Menenius is seen at the Volscian camp outside Rome. He would like an interview with Coriolanus, but the sentinels do not allow him to pass. He tells the sentinels that he has come from Rome, to which the first sentinel replies, "You may not pass ; you must return ; our general will no more hear from thence." Menenius explains that he is a good friend of Coriolanus whom he has always admired and whose brave deeds he has always praised in the hearing of others. But the sentinels do not yield. The first sentinel reminds Menenius of the wrong that the Romans have done to Coriolanus and says that Coriolanus is in no mood to listen to the appeals and entreaties of old women, young girls, or decayed old men like Menenius. Says the first sentinel, "Can you think to blow out the intended fire your city is ready to flame in, with such weak breath as this ? No, you are deceived; therefore back to Rome, and prepare for your execution : you are condemned ; our general has sworn you out of reprieve and pardon." At this stage, Coriolanus appears. He is accompanied with Aufidius. Seeing Coriolanus, Menenius is overjoyed and threatens the sentinels with seveve punishment for their refusal to let him meet Coriolanus. Then turning to Coriolanus, he appeals for mercy to Rome, and punishment to the sentinels. "O my son, my son ! thou art preparing fire for us ; look there, here's water (tears) to quench it. I was hardly moved to come to thee ; but being assured none but myself could move thee, I have been blown out of your gates with sighs ; and conjure thee to pardon Rome and thy petitionary countrymen," says Menenius is a pathetic, tearful voice. But Coriolanus is not touched. "Wife, mother, child, I know not," replies Coriolanus. "Therefore be gone," he says to the man who has always treated Coriolanus like a son. Menenius is heart-broken by Coriolanus's coldness and hardness and he returns to Rome, an utterly disappointed man.

Scene iii. Coriolanus impresses upon Aufidius the fact that he has rejected all appeals from Rome including the suits of Cominius and Menenius. He says that Menenius has always treated him "above the measure of a father" and has

indeed, worshipped him like a god and yet this man had to be sent back to Rome with a "cracked heart". Aufidius acknowledges the firmness of Coriolanus in stopping his ears against "the general suit of Rome and in not listening even to the private whisper of his closest friends". Virgilia, Volumnia, Valeria, and Marcius's son now arrive to make the final effort on behalf of Rome. A natural surge of affection rises in the heart of Coriolanus when he sees his wife, his mother ("the honour'd mould wherein this trunk was framed"), and his child. But he decides to banish all affection and to break "all bond and privilege of nature." In spite of his resolution, he feels as if his heart is melting and so he makes a fresh effort to keep his feelings in check. "Let the Volsces plough Rome, and harrow Italy", says he to himself, "I'll never be such a gosling to obey instinct, but stand, as if a man were author of himself and knew no other kin." He greets his wife ten erly and kneels before his mother respectfully. "That's my brave boy" ! he says to his son, and Volumnia says, "Even he, your wife, this lady (Valeria) and myself are suitors to you." But he urges his mother not "to allay his rages and revenges with her colder reasons." Coriolanus calls upon Aufidius and other Volscians to witness his interview with his family so that he is not afterwards accused of hearing any petition from Rome in private. Volumnia proceeds to argue with her son in respect of his decision to fight against Rome. The mother, the wife, and the child are faced with a strange dilemma, says Volumnia. They can neither wish for a victory for Coriolanus nor pray for a victory for Rome. A victory for Coriolanus would mean the sure destruction of their beloved country, while a victory for Rome would mean the degradation and death of their son, husband, and father. "Thou shalt no sooner march to assault thy country than to tread on thy mother's womb", says Volumnia to her son. "Ay, and mine", adds Virgilia, while the son too something to say, "A' shall not tread on me; I'll run away till I am bigger, but then I'll fight". Coriolanus rises from his seat to go away, and says that he cannot listen to them any more. Arguments and appeals have failed, but Volumnia does not give up her effort. She suggests that he should propose a treaty with Rome, whereby the prestige of the Volscians

does not suffer and whereby Rome is saved. Let the Volscians dictate the terms which may enable them to declare : "This mercy we have show'd" and which may compel the Romans to say, "This we received". She tells her son that in the event of his conquering Rome, his name will always be mentioned with curses. All his nobleness of nature will fail to condone the crime of his destroying his own country, she says. Seeing him unmoved, Volumnia reminds him of how every time he went to a war in the past she prayed for his safety and for his return home, loaded with honour. What has he ever done for her in return ? she asks. "Thou has never in thy life show'd thy dear mother any courtesy", she tells him. But Coriolanus still remains indifferent. Volumia next tries to make him feel ashamed and kneels before him along with the other ladies. "Down, ladies; let us shame him with our knees", says Volumnia, "Down: an end; this is the last: so we will home to Rome, and die among our neighbours." Even the boy kneels and "holds up hands for fellowship." But Coriolanus does not budge from his position. At this point, Volumnia loses her temper. She scolds her son in strong, round terms :

> This fellow had a Volscian to his mother ;
> His wife is in Corioli, and his child—
> Like him by chance. Yet give us our dispatch:
> I am hush'd until our city be afire,
> And then I'll speak a little.

This rebuke has the desired effect. Under the overwhelming pressure of this rebuke, Coriolanus's resistance collapses and his determination gives way. Coriolanus knows full well that any deviation from his original promise to the Volscian senators and to Aufidius may mean his own destruction but he will face the consequences:

> O my mother, mother ! O !
> You have won a happy victory to Rome ;
> But, for your son, believe, O, believe it,
> Most dangerously you have with him prevail'd,
> If not most mortal to him.

He turns to Aufidius for support for his action and Aufidius hypocritically offers that support. In his own mind

Aufidius has no doubt that this turn in the course of events will spell ruin to Coriolanus, a development which will restore Aufidius's own prestige and supremacy and bring about Coriolanus's down-fall.

Scene iv : Menenius is talking to Sicinius about the possibility of Volumnia succeeding where he himself and Cominius have failed. Menenius bitterly complains about Coriolanus's changed attitude and thus describes the changed man, "The tartness of his face sours ripe grapes; when he walks, he moves like an engine, and the ground shrinks before his treading. He sits in his state, as a thing made for Alexander. What he bids be done, is finished with his bidding. He wants nothing of a god but eternity and a heaven to throne in". Meanwhile the people of Rome have turned against their tribunes whom they hold responsible for the misfortune that threatens them and they have already caught hold of Brutus whom they are "haling up and down." News, however, comes that the ladies of Rome have prevailed upon Coriolanus, that the Volscians have marched away, and that Marcius is gone. The Romans throng to celebrate the occasion and there is much beating of drums and blowing of trumpets.

Scene v. Volumina, Virgilia, Valeria return to the city from their embassy and are greeted by the Roman people in a befitting manner for having saved the city from destruction.

Scene vi. Aufidius has already arrived in Antium, while, Coriolanus is due to arrive shortly. Aufidius has prepared a plan of action which aims at the murder of Coriolanus. He wishes to know the temper of the people and of the Volscian lords before actually giving the signal for Coriolanus's assassination. Aufidius's reason for wanting to assassinate Coriolanus is that the latter has not appreciated the concessions and the favours he received from Aufidius and that, instead of feeling grateful, Coriolanus has won over Aufidius's friends thus injuring Aufidius's prestige and supremacy. Aufidius recalls how he not only gave shelter to Coriolanus but "made him joint-servant with me, gave him way in all his own desires, let him choose out of my files my best and freshest men", while Coriolanus afterwards behaved as if Aufidius was not a partner but a follower of Coriolanus, not to speak of his yielding to his mother

and betraying the Volscian cause. The lords of the city of Antium now appear and speak words of welcome to Aufidius on his return home. Aufidius tells the lords that, as already reported to them in his letter, Coriolanus at the very last minute abandoned the whole purpose for which the Volscian army had followed him to the gates of Rome. At this point, Coriolanus arrives with the commoners following him. Coriolanus explains, that the treaty he has signed with Rome is one that brings honour to the Volscians and shame to the Romans, and that the spoils which he has brought are enough to meet more than one-third of the total charges of the campaign. To Coriolanus's utter astonishment, Aufidius here intervenes, calls Coriolanus a traitor, and tells the lords that their powers have been abused by this traitor. "Traitor! how now!" exclaims Coriolanus. "Ay, traitor, Marcius", replies Aufidius. Coriolanus is astounded to hear himself addressed as Marcius instead of as Coriolanus. But Aufidius tells him that "Coriolanus" is a stolen title, one which Marcius has no right to use, accuses Coriolanus of having betrayed the Volscian lords by giving up the city of Rome "for certain drops of salt" (that is the tears of women), and breaking his oath and resolution. Coriolanus, in great distress at this unexpected outburst says, "Hear'st thou, Mars?" And Aufidius insults him still further with the remark: "Name not the god, thou boy of tears". Coriolanus, unable to believe his ears, says "Ha!" And Aufidius reiterates his previous remark. Coriolanus can bear no more. His wrath has been aroused and, as usual, he forgets himself completely. Instead of replying to Aufidius's charges coolly and calmly, he replies with a stinging speech. Not content with calling Aufidius "measureless liar" and "cur", he goes on to hurl an insult upon the Volscian people by referring to the havoc he wrought in Corioli during the last war. Aufidius asks the Volscian lords if they can tolerate this insult whereupon the conspirators shout that he should die for it while the mob supports this proposal. "Tear him to pieces", shout the people. One of the lords tries to soothe the angry mob, but Coriolanus who has lost his balance of mind cannot restrain himself. "O that I had him, with six Aufidiuses, or more, his tribe, to use my lawful sword!" says Coriolanus. Aufidius replies, "Insolent villain" and the conspirators pounce upon Coriolanus with drawn swords and kill him while Aufidius treads upon the murdererd warrior. A

lord says to Aufidius, "Thou hast done a deed whereat valour will weep". Aufidius undertakes to explain his whole conduct to the lords and promises to abide by their judgment if he cannot convince them that Marcius had become a great danger to the Volscian people. Aufidius's anger cools down and he promises an honourable funeral for the dead body of Marcius "My rage is gone. and I am struck with sorrow." He offers to be one of four who will carry the dead body and says that Marcius will have a noble memorial. And here the play ends.

7. A BRIEF CRITICAL SUMMARY OF THE PLAY

ACT I

The play opens with a crowd of Roman citizens, armed with staves, clubs, and other weapons, in a mutinous mood. The citizens are full of anger against the patricians in general, and against Caius Marcius in particular. They face a corn famine and they feel that the patricians are doing nothing to afford them relief. Their anger is particularly directed against Caius Marcius who, in their opinion, is the chief enemy of the people and a very dog to the commonalty. They recognise his services to the country, but they believe that he performed his brave deeds, "to please his mother and to be partly proud." They resolve to kill Caius Marcius. Menenius appears on the scene and tries to pacify the mutinous crowd. Menenius tells them that the patricians are like fathers to the commoners. He says that the responsibility for the famine rests upon the gods and not upon the patricians. The citizens are not convinced by this argument, whereupon Menenius tells them the fable of the belly and the other members of the human body. Caius Marcius comes as Menenius concludes his fable. Seeing the mutinous crowd, Marcius calls them "dissentious rogues" and accuses them of cowardice, ignorance, inconstancy, lack of judgment, stupidity, etc. The citizens disperse.

The news is received that the Volscians are in arms against Rome. The Volscian army is led by a brave warrior by the name of Aufidius. It is decided that Cominius should command the Roman forces and that Marcius and Lartius should attend upon Cominius. The two tribunes, Sicinius and Brutus, talking to each other criticize Marcius for being proud and for his contempt towards them. The tribunes are thoroughly hostile to Caius Marcius.

Marcius leaves for the war against Volscians. Volumnia, the mother of Marcius is glad that her son has got another chance to win glory on the battle-field. But Virgilia, the wife of Marcius, feels sad because of the danger facing her husband, and prays for her husband's safety.

Marcius distinguishes himself in the war against Volscians. He has to fight single-handed inside the city of Corioli. He succeeds in capturing the city and then rushes to the aid of Cominius who had been beaten back by the Volscians. Marcius leads an attack upon the forces of Aufidius. Marcius and Aufidius meet in single combat. The fight is, however, interrupted, and Aufidius flees from the battle-field. Cominius pays a rich tribute to Marcius on the latter's bravery in fighting and offers him a tenth of the captured treasure which is refused by Marcius with the remark that he cannot accept a bribe to pay for his sword. Cominius confers upon Marcius the title of "Coriolanus" in honour of Marcius's capture of the city of Corioli. At the Volscian camp, Aufidius takes a vow to kill Marcius by fair means or foul.

Critical remarks—Act I coutains all the elements in the plot of he play. It shows that the hostility between the patricians and the commoners of Rome is deep rooted. We also see the contrasted elements in the character of Marcius. In the opening scene we see his pride and his contempt for the commoners that will ruin him ; while in the battle field, we see his bravery which excites our admiration now and which will excite our sympathy for him afterwards. Act I forms a kind of preface to the play. It is divisible into two portions ; the first part revealing the pride of Marcius and the second part showing his valour. The object of the two portions of Act I is to complete our impression of the hero before the tragic conflict proper begins.

ACT II

Menenius, in a conversation with the tribunes calls them a pair of un-meriting, proud, violent, and testy magistrates. He cannot tolerate that these fellows should accuse Marcius of being proud. Menenius is delighted to learn from Volumnia that Marcius has won a victory in the Volscian war and is now returning home. Marcius is received by the Romans with great warmth and admiration. Sicinius, talking to his fellow-tribune,

Brutus, expresses the fear that the people will elect Marcius to the consulship. The two tribunes make up their minds to instigate the people against Marcius.

At a meeting of the senate, Cominius describes in detail the brave deeds of Marcius. The senators announce their decision to choose Marcius for the consulship and advise him to seek the votes of the people. Marcius would like to omit the custom of seeking the votes of the people in the traditional manner ; but the tribunes insist that the custom must be observed. Coriolanus, wearing the gown of humility, goes much against his will to the forum to seek the votes of the people for the consulship. He asks for the votes of the citizens in a mocking, jeering manner. The people feel hurt by his manner but they display a remarkable spirit of toleration and promise him their votes. Marcius leaves the forum for the senate-house to obtain confirmation of his election to the consulship.

The tribunes, however, are not happy at what has happened. They address the people and express their disapproval of the people's support to Marcius. They urge the people to revoke the election, reminding them that Marcius has always been an enemy to their interests. The tribunes are successful in their effort to inflame the people against Marcius, and the people agree to revoke the election.

Critical remarks : In this Act, we are brought back from the Volscian war to civil life in Rome. Coriolanus comes fresh from victory to seek the consulship and the people are so impressed by his bravery that they promise their support to him. In the third scene, he touches the highest point of his fortune with his election to the consulship. But unfavourable influences have already been at work. The pride which first makes him refuse to ask for popular vote and which then makes him receive the votes ungraciously shows his utter lack of sympathy with the people. When the first enthusiasm of the people is over, the tribunes quickly show them that Coriolanus is as much their enemy as ever. The tribunes have not been impressed by the victories of Coriolanus and are more alive to his pride. All is ready for his sudden fall in the third Act. Indeed, the object of the second Act is to show the inevitableness of the banishment of Coriolanus in Act III.

ACT III

Marcius, along with the senators, is on his way to the forum when the tribunes stop them and announce that the temper of the citizens has changed and that they are enraged with Marcius. Marcius loses his temper, expresses his disapproval of the mild attitude of the patricians towards the commoners, and speaks contemptuously of the tribunes. The tribunes call him a traitor. A crowd of citizens appear and shout, "Down with him ! Down with him !" Marcius draws his sword and there is a brief scuffle. Menenius tries to plead with the tribunes. The tribunes say that Marcius shall be thrown down the Tarpeian rock to his death for being a traitor. It is, however, mutually agreed between Menenius and the tribunes that Marcius should explain his conduct to the citizens in the market-place.

Marcius is in no mood to give an explanation to the people. However, under the pressure of his mother, he reluctantly agrees to go and to appease the people. Meanwhile the tribunes have tutored the citizens to support any proposal that the tribunes might make regarding the punishment to be awarded to Marcius.

Coriolanus speaks to the crowd of citizens but, as could have been expected, he loses his temper as soon as he is charged with treason. He becomes abusive and defiant. The tribunes declare that Marcius should be punished with banishment from Rome. The citizens shout their support for this verdict. Coriolanus feels enraged beyond measure. He utters curses on the people and the tribunes. The citizens follow him to see him out at the gates of the city. The tribunes feel happy with their achievement.

Critical remarks. Act III contains the crisis of the play. Coriolanus falls from the height of his power and is banished. There is only one evrnt in this Act, and that is the doom that over-takes Coriolanus for his excessive pride and his contempt for the people and the tribunes. Though there is only one event in this Act, yet it is protracted, and the interest is kept up throughout. A feeling of suspense is maintained while the dramatic effect of Coriolanus's fury and its consequences is very powerful. We also see in this Act the hold of Volumnia over her son. But we also see that, in spite of Volumnia's

influence upon her son, Coriolanus cannot suppress his real nature even though he has to pay heavily for it.

Act IV

Coriolanus goes to the city of Antium where he would like to make peace with Aufidius. He has decided to try to form an alliance with Aufidius with the object of attacking Rome and taking his revenge upon the people of Rome. Aufidius receives his former enemy with open arms. He is willing to reach a compromise with Coriolanus and is willing to help Coriolanus in the latter's project of attacking Rome in order to punish the people of Rome. Aufidius offers to Marcius the command of half of his troops and allows him freedom to use his own military strategy in leading the campaign against Rome. "A thousand welcomes and more a friend than ever an enemy," says Aufidius, and takes Marcius warmly by the hand. He then introduces Marcius to the senators of Antium, and obtains their approval of the proposed campaign.

In Rome the tribunes learn that Marcius has joined Aufidius and will lead an army in order to take his revenge upon the Roman people. The tribunes are incredulous and so is Menenius who cannot believe that Marcius could join his bitterest enemy, Aufidius. The news is, however, soon confirmed. Cominius comes with more news. Marcius has not only joined the Volscians but has become their god. Marcius is making a rapid advance on Roman territory. Menenius and Cominius put all the blame for this development on the tribunes. The people, changeful as they are, declare that they agreed to the banishment of Marcius. much against their will. At the Volscian camp, Aufidius is already feeling jealous of the hero-worship that Marcius has earned from the Volscians troops. Aufidius cannot tolerate the growing power of Marciu and contemplates suitable measures to diminish his power and authority.

Critical remarks. In this Act, a new development is shown in the character of Coriolanus. Hitherto, we have believed him to be fully patriotic even though we knew him to be excessively. proud. In Act IV, we discover that Marcius' pride and egoism are much greater than his patriotism. For Marcius to go and join the Volscians and to submit to his former sworn enemy is down-right treason to his country and a blow to his own self-

respect. But his vengeance proves much stronger than any considerations of patriotism or self-respect. We also find in this Act the seeds of the future ruin of Coriolanus. Aufidius's speech containing his resolve to deal with Marcius effectively contains those seeds. As usual in Shakespearean tragedy, the fourth Act is quiet and less dramatic than the other Acts.

Act V

Volscian forces commanded by Aufidius and Coriolanus have encamped outside the gates of Rome and threaten to destroy the city. Cominius's appeals to Coriolanus to relent have already failed. Menenius goes to seek an interview with Coriolanus to try to obtain from him what Cominius has failed to obtain. Coriolanus receives Menenius very coldly and sends him away deeply disappointed. Now it is the turn of Volumnia and Virgilia to seek mercy from Coriolanus towards Rome. Coriolanus greets his wife tenderly and kneels before his mother respectfully. Volumnia appeals to her son's reason and to his sentiments. But Coriolanus remains unmoved. As a last resort, Volumnia loses her temper and scolds her son in strong terms. Coriolanus yields to the rough edge of his mother's tongue. He knows that his surrender to his mother's wishes will mean his own ruin, but he will face the consequences. He refrains from destroying Rome and signs a treaty which, in his opinion, should satisfy the Volscians.

Aufidius is not slow to make use of the opportunity that he finds in Marcius's change of attitude towards Rome. In the presence of the people and the senators of Antium, Aufidius calls Marcius a traitor. He tells the people and the lords that Marcius abandoned the city of Rome just when it had fallen into his hands. Aufidius also refuses to use the title "Coriolanus" for Marcius. Aufidius's insulting words sting Marcius to fury and he speaks not only in a tone of defiance and wrath but goes on to hurl an insult upon the Volscian people. The lieutenants of Aufidius pounce upon Marcius with drawn swords and murder him while Aufidius treads upon the dead body. Aufidius's anger cools down quickly and he promises an honourable funeral for the dead body of Marcius.

Critical remarks. The fifth Act brings about the catastrophe of the play. Coriolanus's egoism proves greater than his patriotism, but his reverence for his mother proves stronger than both.

He gives way to his mother's rebuke, and agrees to spare Rome. But in this surrender to his mother, are the seeds of his destruction. The hypocrisy of Aufidius is emphasised in this Act. He has kept his real feelings towards Marcius well-concealed and well-disguised. In the final scene, the pride and the haughty nature of Marcius are once again emphasised. If he had shown a little patience, matters would probably have been adjusted by the Volscian lords who were urging moderation on both sides. But the pride and the egoism which first led to the banishment of Marcius now lead to his destruction. However, Coriolanus does succeed in winning our sympathies, though it is at the price of his own death.

8. CHARACTER-SKETCHES

(i) Coriolanus

Pride : The most striking trait of Caius Marcius Coriolanus is his pride. In the very opening lines of the play we are made aware of his pride and his contempt for the common people. One of the citizens refers to him as "chief enemy to the people" while the whole crowd join in saying that "he's a very dog to the commonalty." As regards his services to the country, a citizen attributes them not to his love of the country but to his desire to feed his pride. The same citizen goes on to say that Caius Marcius is proud "even to the altitude of his virtue" ; that is his pride is as great as his valour. We find a confirmation of the peole's opinion about Caius Marcius when he first appears and speaks to them in a most insulting manner. "What's the matter, you dissentious rogues that, rubbing the poor itch of your opinion, make yourselves scabs", he says to them. He addresses them as "you fragments". After describing them as cowardly, inconstant and ignorant, he grimly says that, if the nobility were to allow him to use his sword, he would "make a quarry with thousands of these quarter'd slaves, as high as I could pick my lance." Indeed, as an officer of the senate points out, Caius Marcius goes out of the way "to affect the malice and displeasure of the people." He cannot tolerate that such scum as the people should dare to complain even when starvation is staring them in the face. Instead of giving them relief, he would meet their demand by butchering them ; and he would see the city unroofed before permitting any right of

appeal to the people. That the people should demand any rights seems monstrous to him. He seeks the consulship but his pride will not let him perform the ordinary formalities of canvassing. One of the tribunes thus describes the attitude of Caius Marcius towards the formalities of canvassing :—

"I heard him swear,
Were he to stand for consul, never would he
Appear i' the market-place, nor on him put
The napless vesture of humility,
Nor showing, as the manner is, his wounds
To the people, beg their stinking breaths."

In other words, his arrogance and his sense of superiority would not allow him to put on the gown of humility and seek the support of the people. It requires much persuasion by Menenius to prevail upon him to agree to conform to the established custom. This is what he says when urged to go and seek the support of the people in accordance with custom :

"I do beseech you,
Let me o'erleap that custom, for I cannot
Put on the gown, stand naked, and entreat them,
For my wounds' sake, to give their suffrage ;
please you
That I may pass this doing."

When at last he does perform the formalities of canvassing, he does so with a very ill grace. He mocks the people when he begs their votes ; he flouts them downright ; and treats them scornfully. Even Volumnia calls him "too absolute." He cannot brook the slightest opposition ; a word of protest makes him lose his self-control to the point of marring his own chances of success and of breaking what he has just promised. He thinks it a deep humiliation to have to ask the people for their votes. Indeed, he is a man of a towering arrogance. "He is pride incarnate, and any weakening of his pride would in his eyes be disloyalty to an ideal."

When, after a good deal of persuasion, Marcius does canvass for votes, he openly derides the men whose favour he requires. From their consul-elect they expect an assurance of

goodwill and some show of care for their interests. Marcius denies the citizens of Rome even the commonest amenities of public life. The people are disconcerted at being received with mockery but they show an admirable toleration and promise him their votes against their better judgment. When subsequently at the instigation of the tribunes the people revoke their votes, Marcius draws his sword and undertakes to fight them. When Sicinius moves forward to arrest Marcius, the latter speaks to him thus : "Hence, old goat ; hence, rotten thing ; or I shall shake thy bones out of thy garments." Afterwards the senators advise Marcius to keep his hostility to the people in check until he is firmly seated in authority. He refuses this advice. He can only wonder why his mother, who taught him to despise the people, should side with the senators who urge him to speak fair to the people. Volumnia replies that she wishes him to acquire power before he starts making use of it. But Marcius says :

> Must I go show them my unbarbed sconce ?
> Must I with base tongue give my noble want
> A lie that it must bear ?

However, his mother applies the whip and lashes him into submission. (Marcius is his mother's boy and cannot disobey her.) Marcius's surrender to the advice of his mother does not, however, bear the desired fruit. He has so little tact or understanding of the situation that when the tribunes provoke him by calling him a "traitor to the people," he is stung to madness. Incoherent with fury he screams out :

> The fires i' th' lowest hell, fold in the people :
> Call me their traitor, thou injurious Tribune !
> Within thine eyes sat twenty thousand deaths
> In thy hands clutch'd : as many millions in
> Thy lying tongue, both numbers, I would say
> "Thou liest" unto thee, with a voice as free,
> As I do pray the gods.

Marcius not only loses his temper but also his control of logic and reason. There is nothing subtle about this man. His defeat at the hands of the tribunes with their greater intelligence and cunning is inevitable. Mercius is not only not intelli-

gent or tactful; he is stupid, and his stupidity is beyond all symapthy. He has to pay for his raging fury and his obstinacy by being banished. But though defeated, he is not subdued and his tongue is as rasping as ever ;

> You common cry of curs, whose breath I hate,
> As reek o' the rotten fens : whose loves I prize
> As the dead carcases of unburied men,
> That do corrupt my air :.........

As Sicinius has said earlier, it is as easy to provoke Marcius "as to set dogs on sheep". Similarly, Brutus was right in speaking thus about Marcius :

> If, *as his nature is, he fall in rage* with their refusal,.........

What is the nature of the pride of this man ? His pride is partly a pride of class :

> "and what stock he springs of,
> The noble house o' the Marcius, from whence came
> That Ancus Marcius, Numa's daughter's son,
> Who, after great Hostilius, here was king ;
> ... ...
> And Censorinus, that was so surnamed,
> And nobly named so, twice being censor,
> Was his great ancestor. (Act II, Sc. iii 239-247).

It is the pride of noble ancestory. Born of a noble and haughty race, he has inherited from his mother an inflexible spirit. He has been brought up in the belief that arrogance to his inferiors is a birthright, and almost a virtue. He is invariably courteous to the patricians, and submits without hestitation to follow Cominius, being utterly unconscious of the base motive that the tribunes attribute to him. His pride is also a form of his intense egoism. "I banish you !" he cries to the Roman citizens when he is banished by them. Thus the pride of Coriolanus is two-fold : a passionate self-esteem which is essentially egoistic, and secondly a passionate prejudice of class. Towards his equals he speaks with moderation and restraint ; towards them he even shows a kind of humility with regard to his military achievements. But so far as the multitude is concerned, he can hardly speak to them without his contempt

for them breaking through. Referring to Marcius, an officer says, "That's a brave fellow ; but he's vengeance proud, and loves not the common people." Nor does Marcius show much affection for the soldiers who fight beside him. In the first assault on Carioli, his men are beaten back to their trenches. This is how he scolds them :

> Boils and plagues
> Plaster you o'er, that you may be abhorr'd
> Further than seen and one infect another
> Against the wind a mile ! You souls of geese
> That bear the shapes of men.

Little wonder that the soldiers refuse to follow him inside the gates of Corioli. Marcius, indeed, does not show that quality of leadership which Cominius possesses. The men following Cominius are also beaten back by the enemy, but this is how Cominius speaks to them :

> Breathe you, my friends : well fought ; we are come off
> Like Romans,... ... ...

Valour : Caius Marcius has an impressive record of military glory. Cominius gives to the senate a most striking and almost awful account of the brave deeds of Caius Marcius :—

> "At sixteen years,
> When Tarquin made a head for Rome, he fought
> Beyond the mark of others... ... ...
> ... ...
> Tarquin's self he met,
> And struck him on his knee... ... ...
> ... ...His pupil age
> Man-enter'd thus, he waxed like a sea,
> And, in the brunt of seventeen battles since,
> He lurch'd all swords of the garland... ...
> ... ...
> and till we call'd
> Both field and city ours, he never stood
> To ease his breast with panting.
>
> (Act II Sc. ii 84—118)

Volumnia proudly speaks of the twentyfive wounds which Marcius had on his body before he undertook the campaign against the Volscians. He suffers two more wounds in the Volscian campaign, making a total of twentyseven. As Volumnia puts it : 'There will be large cicatrices to show the people, when he shall stand for his place. He received in the repulse of Tarquin seven hurts i' the body." Aufidius fully recognizes the valour of Marcius. When a soldier refers to Marcius as "the devil", Aufidius says that Marcius is even bolder than the devil, "My valour's poison'd with only suffering stain by him," says Aufidius, meaning that his valour is eclipsed by that of Marcius. Both friend and foe pay tributes to the bravery, fearlessness, and war-like qualities of Marcius. Marcius has never spared himself in the service of his country. "Consider you what services he has done for his country ? says one of the citizens. "He has deserved worthily of his country", says an officer, ".........he hath so planted his honours in their eyes and his actions in their hearts, that for their tongues to be silent and not confess so much, were a kind of ingrateful injury." He feels a real delight in fighting. He emerges from Corioli dripping with blood, but eager for more blows :

> My work hath yet not warm'd me : fare you well :
> The blood I drop is rather physical
> Than dangerous to me :

Meeting with Cominius on the battlefield he compares his delight in fighting to the pleasure he felt on his wedding day :

> O : let me clip ye
> In arms as sound as when I woo'd, in heart
> As merry as when our nuptial day was done,
> And tapers burn'd to bedward !

Treason : He is a peerless fighter, absolutely without fear. It must, however, be admitted that the services he has rendered to his country, whether in the battle against the Tarquin or in the campaign against the Volscians, were motivated more by his love of himself than by his love of the country. In other

words, he sets himself above his country, and his egoism is greater than his patriotism. He is a patriot only as long as the Romans bow to the authority of the patricians including himself. As soon as the patricians stand discredited in the eyes of the commoners and as soon as he is banished, he turns against Rome. And he not only turns against Rome. He goes and makes peace with Aufidius. He joins the Volscians and makes war against Rome. This is downright treason and his own mother accuses him in unambiguous terms of treason. Not all his past services to his country and not all his valour can condone his action in joining the enemies of Rome and in deciding to destroy Rome. He has been the foremost defender of his country ; and yet the very same man becomes the foremost opposer of his country. There is nothing to extenuate his treachery and his desertion.

True son : However, there is another force which plays a greater role in his life than either his egoism, or his vengeance against Rome. That force is his reverential love for his mother. A citizen declares in the opening scene that Marcius's brave deeds are inspired by filial affection rather than by zeal for the country. This dutiful strain in the character of Marcius is the common talk of Rome. He has spurned the appeals of Cominius and Menenius ; of one under whom he had served in the wars and of another who always treated him as a son. But to his mother's appeals, he cannot turn a deaf ear. He resists his mother's pressure as much as he can, but his resistance breaks down. He knows that in yielding to his mother he is signing his own death-warrant, but yield he does, saying :—

"O my mother, mother ! O !
You have won a happy victory to Rome ;
But, for your son, believe it, O, believe it,
Most dangerously you have with him prevail'd,
If not most mortal to him."

He is a true son, though not a true patriot. His yielding to his mother is no surrender, but the noblest kind of triumph. It is touching to see this man, who is pride incarnate and egoism personified, showing a human side to his personality. "This magnificent and arrogant warrior, who bends his head

neither to God nor to man, bows before his mother." But for his human side, seen in his tenderness towards his wife, his reverential love for his mother, his paternal love for his son, and his consideration for the old man in whose house he had taken shelter in Corioli, Marcius would have been a veritable demon. His relations with his wife are, indeed, marked by a tenderness which was not to be expected from so arrogant a man. On returning from his Volscian campaign he thus greets her: "My gracious silence, hail", and "O my sweet lady, pardon". At the height of his military glory, he makes this appeal to Cominius, his general:

'I sometime lay here in Corioli
At a poor man's house; he used me kindly:
He cried to me; I saw him prisoner;
........................I request you
To give my poor host freedom.

Human qualities: At the time of his banishment, too, we see his human qualities in the way he bids farewell to his friends, his wife and his mother. He is tender with his friend, Menenius, and with Cominius, his old commander; affectionate with his wife; lovingly dutiful towards his mother:

Come, my sweet wife, my dearest mother and
My friends of noble touch, when I am forth,
Bid me farewell, and smile.

The most amiable side of Marcius appears in this scene of farewell. We see here the most engaging qualities of the hero, the aristocrat who, within the closed circle of his family and friends, is considerate, courteous, affectionate; and who faces misfortune with a brave heart. Even his pride is touched with a noble fortitude in which ill-will is for the moment stilled. We see his tenderness for his wife once again when she meets him at the gates of Rome:

Best of my flesh,
Forgive my tyranny.......................
.....................O, a kiss
Long as my exile, sweet as my revenge!
Now, by the jealous queen of heaven, that kiss

I carried from thee; dear; and my true lip
Hath virgin'd it e'er since.

In his son he feels a father's joy and expresses an ambitious hope of the boy's possible heroic feature :

The god of soldiers,
With the consent of supreme Jove, inform
Thy thoughts with nobleness; that thou may'st prove
To shame invulnerable, and stick i' the wars
Like a great sea-mark, standing every flaw,
And saving those that eye thee!

There is something touching in this glow of paternal affection.

Besides this humanity, there are in Marcius other attractive qualities also. He possesses a real modesty which shrinks from all public eulogy. When Titus Lartius begins to praise him for his brave fighting, he stops him with the words "Pray now, no more........................I have done as you have done." When Cominius pays him a tribute in the presence of the troops, Marcius says, "I have wounds upon me, and they smart to hear themselves remember'd." In other words, he does not want that any reference be made to his fierce fighting and to the wounds he has received. Indeed "when publicly congratulated he becomes as shy and bashful as a school-girl." He rebukes the soldiers when they throw up their caps and lances and cry "Marcius! Marcius!". When Cominius begins his account of the valour of Marcius to the senators, Marcius leaves the senate-hall, averse to hear his own praises. The man is "arrogant" but he is not "vain". He also displays his generosity of nature when he refuses to enrich himself with the spoils of war which are offered to him. Cominius offers to him a tenth of all the horses and of all the treasure captured in the war but this is the reply of Marcius :

I thank you, general;
But cannot make my heart consent to take
A bribe to pay my sword : I do refuse it,
And stand upon my common part with those
That have beheld the doing.

He thinks that his acceptance of Cominius's offer would mean an acceptance of a bribe. He also shows his disdain of the spoils of war earlier when he condemns the Romans who are plundering the city of Corioli :

> See here these movers that do prize their hours
> At a crack'd drachma ! Cushions, leaden spoons,
> Irons of a doit, doublets that hangmen would
> Bury with those that wore them, these base slaves,
> Ere yet the fight be done, pack up.

Nor must we ingore Marcius's talent for the effective and telling phrase. He is very eloquent—both when he is tender and when he is rough. It has been said about him that he has a power of raising vituperation (= abuse) to the level of great poetry. He has a wonderful command of language and when he is roused, his vivid imagination expresses itself in a splatter of nasty images. The passage, already quoted in part, in which he denounces his soldiers for falling back is an illustration :

> Pluto and hell !
> All hurt behind ; backs red, and faces pale
> With flight and agued fear ! Mend and charge home,
> Or, by the fires of heaven, I'll leave the foe,
> And make my wars on you :

Indeed, Marcius exults in his contempt for the commons and possesses a rich and fluent vocabulary of abuse. Speaking to the mutinous crowd, he says :

> What would you have, you curs,
> That like nor peace nor war ? the one affrights you,
> The other makes you proud. He that trusts to you,
> Where he would find you lions, finds you hares :
> Where foxes, geese : you are..................
> ....Hang ye : trust ye ?

He speaks with equal emphasis and force when he denounces Aufidius in Antium. Addressing the Volscian lords about Aufidius's false allegations against himself, he bursts out thus :

Your judgments, my brave lords,
Must give this cur the lie : and his own notion—
Who wears my stripes impresse'd upon him ; that
Must bear my beating to his grave—shall join
To thrust the lie unto him.

and turning to Aufidius he goes on thus :

False hound !
If you have writ your annals true, 'tis there,
That like an eagle in a dove-cote, I
Flutter'd your Volscians in Corioli,
Alone I did it.

The poetic quality of his "tender" speeches is clearly to be seen in the manner of his speaking to his wife.

Caius Marcius Coriolanus is proud, haughty, boastful, arrogant, obstinate, stupid. He is the supreme egoist, concerned only with the feeding of his own pride at the expense of his friends, his mother, his wife, and his country. His patriotism is superficial and quickly gives way to his egoism. He has an irrational contempt and hatred for the commons. He is an unequalled warrior, exulting in blood-shed and thinking nothing of his wounds. He is a fearless fighter, a superb soldier, but he is also a proud, triple-turned traitor. When he surrenders, he surrenders only to his mother and, that too, not without a stiff resistance. He does not yield to her reasoning or her logic, but only to her threats. "Shakespeare saw him as a combination of three types : the unintelligent but utterly fearless soldier; the proud aristocrat who despises his inferiors; and the darling son of a domineering mother." He is not without a certain humanity which shows itself in his relations with his friends, his mother, and his wife and in a certain modesty which shows itself when he is publicly praised for his military exploits. "A haughty and passionate personal feeling, a superb egoism are with Coriolanus the sources of weakness and strength." The dominant ideal of this man is "self-centred power." His noble life is ruined through "the sin of pride".

"He is rigid and obstinate ; but under the influence of an angry egoism he can renounce his principles, his party, and his native city. He will not bear away to his private use the paltry booty of the Volsces; but to obtain the consulship he is

urged by his proud mother and his patrician friends to stand bare-headed before the mob, to expose his wounds, to sue for their votes, to give his heart the lie, to bend the knee like a beggar asking an alms. The judgment and blood of Coriolanus are ill commingled; he desires the end, but can only half submit to the means which are necessary to attain that end; he has not sufficient self-control to enable him to dispose of those chances of which he is lord. And so he mars his fortune."

"The pride of Coriolanus is rendered altogether inflammable and uncontrollable by passion; in so much that if a spark of provocation is struck into the latter, the former instantly flames up beyond measure, and sweeps away all the regards of prudence, decorum, and even of common sense; and by this uncontrollable violence of temper Coriolanus draws down upon himself his banishment from Rome, and his subsequent fate."

Cominius in one of his speeches suggests the reconciling conception of the state as an extension of the organic bonds of the family, a conception analogous to the ideal of the creative mutuality hinted at by Menenius's fable of the belly. "But a whole-hearted response to that ideal demands some personal integration and maturity, and Coriolanus, as Wyndham Lewis remarked, remains to the end the "boy" that Aufidius taunts him with being. Not indeed that we accept Aufidius's perverse statement of the whole situation. But as defence against it Coriolanus can only reassert those partial and over-simplified values which accepted as absolutes, have stood between him and an adequately integrated and responsive life. That is his personal tragedy."

(*ii*) MENENIUS

Menenius is a patrician of the same class as Coriolanus; but unlike Coriolanus, Menenius enjoys a certain popularity with the people on account of his good nature and wide sympathy. The Second Citizen thus refers to him : "Worthy Menenius Agrippa; one that hath always loved the people", to which the First Citizen replies, "He's one honest enough". Unlike Coriolanus, again, this patrician condescends to argue with the people and their tribunes. Seeing the mutinous crowd, he asks them :

What work's, my countrymen, in hand ? Where go you.
With bats and clubs ? the matter ? speak, I pray you.

This manner of speaking to the crowd is different from the way in which Caius Marcius speaks to the same crowd a little later :

> What's the matter, you dissentious rogues,
> That, rubbing the poor itch of your opinion,
> Make yourselves scabs ?

Menenius pleads with the mutinous crowd :

> Why, masters, my good friends, mine honest neighbours,
> Will you undo yourselves ?

He explains to them that the dearth of corn is a calamity for which the gods, not the patricians, are responsible. "I tell you, friends, most charitable care / Have the patricians of you", he says. The patricians, he tells them, care for them like fathers and should not be treated by them as enemies. To give point to his defence of the patricians and the senators, he tells them the tale of the belly and the other members of the body. He tells them the tale in an artful manner, too. He speaks to them in a genial, conversational style, seeming to relish his own narrative and trying to make it interesting as well as instructive for his audience. He does not mind the First Citizen's remark "Well, I'll hear it, sir : yet you must not think *to fob off our disgrace with a tale*" a remark which, if it had been addressed to Caius Marcius, would have stung Marcius to fury. Instead of rebuking the First Citizen, Menenius commences the fable coolly and deliberately, adding detail to detail. When the First Citizen becomes a a little impatient and asks "Well, sir, what answer made the belly ?" Menenius does not feel annoyed at all and says, "Sir, I shall tell you". When a little later the First Citizen again asks "Your belly's answer ? what ?" Menenius does feel irritated and even scolds the First Citizen : "What then ? 'Fore me, this fellow speaks. What then ? What then ?" But even now it is good-humoured chafing and no loss of temper. Menenius is tolerant and even indulgent towards the crowd, just as the crowd is tolerant and even indulgent towards him. The First Citizen even criticises Menenius for the latter's prolixity: "Ye're long about it". But Menenius remains unruffled and undisturbed and continues to speak in the same prolix style. Menenius is disposed to regard the citizens with an affectionate tolerance, provided they know their place and are content to attribute their misfortunes to heaven and not to the Government of which he is a

member. For him it is an axiom that his class is supreme in the nation and should be treated as such by the commoners. Menenius is popular. But Shakespeare makes it plain that he has no understanding of the people's grievances, no real respect for their rights or opinions, no grasp of the social issues involved. Menenius in his conversation with the mutinous crowd maintains throughout his attitude of familiarity with the citizens, but concludes with the misleading assertion that all good derives from the nobility and that none can come from the commoners themselves:

> Touching the weal o' the common, you shall find
> No public benefit which you receive
> But it proceeds or comes from them to you
> And no way from yourselves

Seeing that he has created some sort of effect by his fable, he can even administer the following reprimand to the leader of the mutinous crowd :

> For that, being one o' the lowest, basest, poorest,
> Of this most wise rebellion, thou go'st foremost :
> Thou rascal ....

He is essentially an aristocrat with a contempt for the people, but this contempt finds expression only when he is too irritated or provoked and not at all odd times as in the case of Caius Marcius. To Marcius he says that the people "though abundantly they lack discretion, yet are *passing cowardly*."

His own description of himself as a pleasure-loving, blunt, out-spoken, hot-tempered patrician, who does not harbour grudges or malice, is true enough: "I am known to be a humorous patrician, and one that loves a cup of hot wine with not a drop of allaying Tiber in't...............*What I think I utter, and spend my malice in my breath*", he says, speaking of himself.

Upon the tribunes whom he judges not impartially but exclusively by their attitude towards Marcius, he pours scorn and ridicule. Just because the tribunes accuse Marcius of pride, Menenius is up in arms and speaks to them with a mingled contempt and mockery, showing thus his gift for sarcasm, irony and even abuse. He describes the tribunes as "a brace of unmeriting, proud, violent, testy magistrates, alias fools, as any in Rome." He addresses them thus: "You know neither me, yourselves, nor

anything. You are ambitious for poor knaves' caps and legs: ....You are a pair of strange ones." He is carried away by his own rhetoric and becomes almost arrogant: "When you speak best unto the purpose, it is not worth the wagging of your beards; and your beards deserve not so honourable a grave as to stuff a botcher's cushion, or to be entombed in an ass's pack-saddle...... God-den to your worships: more of your conversation would infect my brain, being the herdsmen of the beastly plebeians." The contemptuous phrase "the beastly plebeians" he employs for the common people, is to be noted. The same irritation and impatience are expressed by Menenius in his talk with the tribunes later in the play when Coriolanus and Aufidius threaten Rome with destruction : "Why, so : you have made good work !" he says to the tribunes, "A pair of tribunes that have rack'd for fair Rome, to make coals cheap : a noble memory", and "You are the musty chaff, and you are smelt above the moon : we must be burnt for you". It must be admitted that Menenius's reproaches of the tribunes are quite spicy and quite witty. He is a true mocker, and his mockery is pungent and sharp.

Menenius has a deep and sincere affection and regard for Caius Marcius. Indeed, he is an ardent admirer of Marcius and is almost blind to Marcius's faults. Strangely enough, he calls Marcius a bear *who lives like a lamb*. When the tribunes call Marcius proud and boastful, Menenius rejects the charge. Pride is such a glaring feature of Marcius that for Menenius not to agree to the tribunes' judgment in this regard shows an ununderstandable partiality towards Marcius. "You blame Marcius for being proud", he asks the tribunes and appears to be unable to comprehend how this charge could be brought against Marcius. He goes into raptures on hearing that Marcius is returning home from the Volscian war, wounded and crowned with glory. On hearing that there is a letter for him from Marcius, he feels intoxicated with delight : "A letter for me ! it gives me an estate of seven years' health" and "I will make my very house reel tonight : a letter for me ?" When Marcius arrives, Menenius says : "A hundred thousand welcomes. I could weep, and I could laugh ; I am light and heavy." In the senate-hall, Menenius calls upon Cominius "to report a little of that worthy work performed by Caius Marcius Coriolanus." When Brutus interrupts the proceedings with accusing

Marcius of having no love for the common people, Menenius thus defends his hero :

"He loves your people ;
But tie him not to be their bed-fellow."

and

"Masters of the people,
Your multiplying spawn how can he flatter—
That's thousand to one good one—when you now see
He had rather venture all his limbs for honour
Than one on's ears to hear it ?"

(He refers to the common people as "multiplying spawn"). He is very anxious to see Marcius elected to the consulship and, to that end, he employs every possible device to prevail upon him to conform to the established custom in order to seek votes from the people. When the people are incensed by the tribunes against Marcius, Menenius makes every possible effort to soothe and appease them, but at no stage does he scold or feel offended with Marcius for being arrogant towards the people. This is the nearest he comes to criticizing Marcius, "What, the vengeance, could he not speak them fair"? At the same time he wishes that the people were drowned in the river Tiber. It is thus that he defends Marcius for being blunt :

"His nature is too noble for the world :
He would not flatter Neptune for his trident ;
Or Jove for's power to thunder. His heart's in his mouth :
What his breast forges, that his tongue must vent."

A fault of Marcius is thus accounted a virtue by his admirer. Menenius argues with the tribunes and with the people in a desperate bid to save Marcius. He even pleads with Marcius :

"Come, come, you have been too rough, something too rough ;
You must return and mend it."

He calls upon Marcius to return to the tribunes and to "repent what you have spoke". Speaking on his behalf to the people, Menenius says :

"Do not take
His rougher accents for malicious sounds,
But, as I say, such as become a *soldier*
Rather than envy you."

When he finds Marcius again getting out of control, he tries to restrain him ; "Nay, temperately ; your promise", and again, "Is this the promise that you made your mother?." The sentence of banishment having been passed against Marcius, Menenius wishes that he could accompany his hero into exile. Menenius finds it easy to condone the entire conduct of Marcius :

"If I could shake off but one seven years
From these old arms and legs, by the good gods,
I'ld with thee every foot."

Menenius is, indeed, as he himself says, "the book of Coriolanus's good acts, whence men have read his fame unparalleled, haply amplified." But his view of Coriolanus, as will appear from what has been said above is always one-sided. He even thinks that the reason why Cominius failed to prevail upon Coriolanus to give up his resolve to destroy Rome was that Coriolanus had not dined. He decides to go to Coriolanus at a time when the latter is "dieted to my request." He fails to understand Coriolanus' real nature and the real reason for his rejecting the appeal of Cominius. He goes to meet Coriolanus with the confidence that the latter, who has been like a son to him, will listen to him and give up his revengeful attitude towards Rome. His mission fails. Coriolanus's reply to the appeal of the man who was like a father to him is : "Another word, Menenius, I will not hear thee speak." This reply comes like a shock and a blow to Menenius, and the pathos of his rejection is very touching. There is a certain dignity in his speech after he has been rejected that rouses the unwilling admiration of the sentinel who has just been ridiculing him : "I care neither for the world nor for your general", he says to the sentinel, "let your general do his worst......................................" And when he makes his exit, the sentinel's comment is "A noble fellow, I warrant him." After this unsuccessful interview with Coriolanus, Menenius feels quite bitter about him. Here are some of the comments he makes upon Coriolanus after the failure of his mission, "This Marcius is grown from man to dragon : he has wings.......................The tartness of his face sours ripe grapes : when he walks he moves like an engine, and the ground shrinks from his treading......................He sits in his state as a thing made for Alexander..................He wants nothing of a god but eternity and a heaven to throne in...........There

is no more mercy in him than there is milk in a male tiger." But even in this frame of mind, Menenius is far from accusing Coriolanus of treason to the country. It is exactly here that Volumnia rises to a greater height than Menenius. Volumnia does not mince matters ; she does a bit of plain-speaking :

"This fellow had a Volscian to his mother
His wife is in Corioli, and his child
Like him by chance."

These are Volumnia's words when she finds her son unresponsive to her appeals. But Menenius just swallows his disgrace when his suit is rejected by Coriolanus. Talking to the tribunes on his return to Rome, Menenius speaks as if Marcius is a divine scourge upon the city for its ingratitude : "No, in such a case the gods will not be good unto us. When we banished him, we respected not them ; and he, returning to break our necks, they respect not us." Strange that this man should almost justify Coriolanus's threatened destruction of Rome ! Menenius's servility to Coriolanus, his lack of judgment in respect of Coriolanus, his blind admiration for Coriolanus do him little credit.

Yet Menenius has been made in some way lovable. "There is a dash of Falstaff in this second Polonius." His worldly wisdom links him with Polonius while his wit links him with Falstaff. Shakespeare has developed the character of Menenius from Plutarch's hint that Menenius was one of "the pleasantest old men" deputed by the senate to reason with the plebeians. This is how Ridley sums up Shakespeare's Menenius : "Menenius is a delightful old man, shrewd and honest, with a penetrating eye for human weaknesses, both his own and others', and really human. His patriotism is as eager as Coriolanus's, and much less egotistical. He cannot, for example, believe that the ladies will succeed where he has ignominiously failed ; but when they do succeed his joy at the salvation of Rome far outweighs any feelings of personal slight."

(*iii*) VOLUMNIA

Volumnia is surely the greatest of all Shakespeare's matrons. A Roman matron, of the old aristocracy, she is the personification of patrician and family pride. She has brought up her son in the traditions of his caste and taught him to see

in heroic exploits the highest perfection of a noble nature. Other mothers might cherish an only son with a tender care and anxiety ; but Volumnia's maternal love has moulded and fashioned her son for the stern rigours of warfare. This is how she speaks of the manner in which she has brought up her son:"When yet he was but tender-bodied, and the only son of my womb ; when youth with comeliness plucked all gaze his way ; when, for a day of king's entreaties, a mother should not sell him an hour from her beholding ; I was pleased to let him seek danger where he was like to find fame. To a cruel war I sent him......" When she is asked by Virgilia, how she would have felt if Marcius had been killed in the war to which she had sent him, she replies, "Hear me profess sincerely ; had I a dozen sons, each in my love alike, and none less dear than thine and my good Marcius, I had rather had eleven die nobly for their country than one voluptuously surfeit out of action."

Indeed, we are amazed by the fierce nature of Volumnia and her delight in war. We can imagine what kind of a warrior she would have been, had she been born a man. This is how she pictures her son fighting in the Volscian war, (she is speaking to Virgilia) :

> Methinks I hear hither your husband's drum ;
> See him pluck Aufidius down by the hair ;
> As children from a bear, the Volsces shunning him :
> Methinks I see him stamp thus, and call thus :
> ... ...
> ... ...
> ... ...his bloody brow
> With his mailed hand then wiping, forth he goes,
> ... ...

Then Virgilia feels disconcerted by "his bloody brow" Volumnia thus rebukes her:

> Away, you fool ! it (bloody brow) more becomes a man
> Than gilt his trophy:

And she illustrates this point with a reference to Hector's bloody brow during the Trojan war. "He'll beat Aufidius' head below his knee, and tread upon his neck", she goes on to say with reference to her son's valour. The greatest aspiration of this woman with regard to her son is that he should win laurels in war. The wounds a warrior suffers do but add to his glory,

according to her. She talks with pride of the twentyfive wounds which Marcius had on his body before going to the Volscian war and with more pride still of the two new wounds he has received, one in the shoulder and the other in the left arm, in the course of the Volscian campaign. Her sheer exultation in the triumph of Marcius is grimly expressed in the following words about him :

before him he
Carries noise, and behind him he leaves tears :
Death, that dark spirit, in's nervy arm doth lie ;
Which, being advanced, declines, and then men die.

Wounds, blood, death—these have no terror for Volumnia. A warrior must be prepared to face these, and her son, the foremost warrior, should be more prepared for these than any other. When Marcius returns victorious from the Volscian war, and kneels before his mother, she says proudly:

Nay, my good soldier, up ;

and again :

I have lived
To see inherited my very wishes
And the buildings of my fancy :

But Volumnia is not satisfied with the military achievements of her son. She would like to see him elected consul of Rome. "Only there's one thing wanting, which I doubt not but our Rome will cast upon thee", she says to Marcius with reference to the consulship. In order to see him elected to the seat of authority, she urges him to suspend his patrician pride for the time being and to put his power well on before wearing it out :

O, sir, sir, sir,
I would have had you put your power well on,
Before you had worn it out.

and she goes on to say to him :

You might have been enough the man you are
With striving less to be so : lesser had been
The thwartings of your dispositions, if
You had not show'd them how you were dispos'd,
Ere they lack'd power to cross you.

and

Pray, be counsell'd :
I have a heart as little apt as yours
But yet a brain that leads my use of anger
To better vantage.

In other words, Volumnia, unlike her son, is willing to subordinate her pride to the exigencies of the situation. She believes in policy and in strategy. It is no dishonour in her eyes to dissemble if dissembling leads to honour. In other words, the end justifies the means. She tries to convince her son of this by saying :

I would dissemble with my nature where
My fortunes and my friends at stake required
I should do so in honour.

Thus she urges him to hypocrisy for the attainment of his objective. When he resists, she loses her patience. She has argued and pleaded in vain. Now she applies the whip. She uses her maternal authority to lash him into submission. She is gentle and affectionate with him as long as he acts in accordance with her wishes. But she bullies him and domineers over him when he proves obstinate :

At thy choice, then :
To beg of thee, it is my more dishonour
Than thou of them. Come all to ruin ; let
Thy mother rather feel thy pride than fear
Thy dangerous stoutness.........
............Do as thou list ;
Thy valiantness was mine, thou suckd'st it from me,
But owe thy pride thyself.

The resistance of Marcius completely breaks down at these words of his mother. There is a difference between the pride of Coriolanus and the pride of Volumnia. Her pride is centred in him, while his pride is centred in himself. Her pride, again, is tempered by reason ; she has the self-control that Coriolanus lacks, and she has a foresight which he does not have.

When Marcius is banished, Volumnia's anger and sorrow know no bounds and she cries :

Now the red pestilence strike all trades in Rome,
And occupations perish !

On meeting the Tribunes, after her son's banishment, her anger is let loose without restraint :

I would my son
Were in Arabia, and thy tribe before him,
His good sword in his hand.

Bastards and all, she cries. When the tribunes have left her, she vents her anger thus :

I would the gods had nothing else to do
But to confirm my curses ! Could I meet'em
But once a-day, it would unclog my heart
Of what lies heavy to 't.

When Menenius invites her to supper, she thus expresses her feelings :

Anger's my meat ; I sup upon myself,
And so shall starve with feeding. Come, let's go :
Leave this faint puling, and lament as I do,
In anger, Juno-like.

She is not the one to indulge in weak lamentations ; she will "*lament in anger, Juno-like*". Even at this time of near-despair, her spirit is not broken down. She retains her pride and her haughtiness and she shows her essential masculinity. She proves braver than Brutus' Portia (in *Julius Caesar*).

But though, in her wildness of anger and grief, she has cursed Rome and the people of Rome, her patriotism is genuine and deep. At the crucial moment when Rome is threatened with destruction by Coriolanus, she undertakes to go in order to intercede with her son and to avert the catastrophe. Her speeches in this last interview between mother and son are noble and lofty, and they vibrate with intense feeling. She begins her appeal by offering herself, his wife, and his son as suitors to him:

Even he, your wife, this lady and my-self
Are suitors to you.

He asks her not to plead for mercy to Rome. She persists :

Yet we will ask ;
That if you fail in our request, the blame
May hang upon your hardness : therefore hear us.

She goes on to give one argument after another against carrying out his threat to Rome. She reminds him that his son, his wife and his mother are before him to prevent him from "tearing his country's bowels out" ; they can pray neither for his victory (which means the destruction of Rome), nor for his defeat (which means his own ruin). Should he destroy the noble reputation he had earned by his former deeds ? she asks him. Is his name to be for ever detested as that of a man who laid in ashes the city of his birth ? Is it wise for him to persist in war when he can make peace with fair advantage to both sides ? Is it human for a man to spurn all natural ties ? Her pleading becomes more urgent, but he remains silent and unmoved. With growing emotion, she becomes pathetic and personal :

There's no man in the world
More bound to's mother, yet here he lets me prate
Like one i' the stocks. Thou hast never in thy life
Show'd thy dear mother any courtesy ;
When she, poor hen, fond of no second brood ,
Has cluck'd thee to the war, and safely home,
Loaden with honour.

These words greatly weaken the resistance of Coriolanus ; yet he turns to go away. But Volumnia and the others go down on their knees :

He turns away :
Down ladies ; let us shame him with our knees.
To his surname Coriolanus, 'longs more pride
Than pity to our prayers. Down:

Coriolanus pauses, but still says nothing. Then Volumnia uses her last weapon. If Coriolanus will yield neither to *reason, pity,* nor, *sentiment,* he may yet be subdued by *anger*. She rises and with all her dignity and fury, she lashes out at him:

Come, let us go ;
This fellow had a Volscian to his mother ;
His wife is in Corioli, and his child
Like him by chance. Yet give us our dispatch :
I am hush'd until our city be a-fire,
And then I'll speak a little.

As on the earlier occasion, she had scolded him into compliance with her wishes, so now she enforces his obedience by a show of anger and offended impatience. It is not to her arguments that Marcius yields, but to the rough edge of her tongue. On the previous occasion she had subdued him in an effort to save his consulship. On this occasion she subdues him for a nobler and higher purpose, namely, to save Rome. By her impassioned and truly patriotic speeches on this occasion, she more than makes up for any faults or deficiencies she might have betrayed in herself before. Even when Coriolanus tells her that his compliance with her wishes would mean his ruin and his death, she does not modify her stand. Better that her son should go to his ruin and death than that he should destroy the country of his birth. In the conflict between her maternal and patriotic instincts, the latter win and win easily. Junius Brutus could condemn his own sons to death for treachery to their country, and with no less of Roman fortitude Volumnia perfers to face a like bereavement. Volumnia here rises to supreme self-sacrifice and to sublime heights of glory. Inded, we might say with Ridley that Volumnia is Rome incarnate, the Eternal City, whom all her great sons obeyed and served.

(iv) VIRGILIA, A CONTRAST TO VOLUMNIA

If Volumnia is essentially masculine and "Juno-like" in her strength, Virgilia is the purely feminine type and rather weak. Virgilia, who lives in the same household with her mother-in-law, is tyrannised over by the latter with her much stronger mind. When, for instance, Lady Valeria is announced, Virgilia asks her mother-in-law's permission to retire to her own chamber, but the permission is not granted and Virgilia has to stay on against her will.

Virgilia : Beseech you, give me leave to retire myself.

Volumnia : Indeed, you shall not.

Where Volumnia expresses a sense of glory in her son's danger, Virgilia feels anxiety and alarm about the risks to which her husband is exposed. Volumnia, describing the brave fighting of Marcius, refers to his bloody brow, whereupon Virgilia says, "His bloody brow! O Jupiter, no blood". But Volumnia dismisses Virgilia's fear with "Away, you fool! it more becomes a man than gilt his trophy." Virgilia has none of Volumnia's

delight in butchery. When Volumnia exultantly describes how she sent her son to a cruel war, Virgilia timidly asks, "But had he died in the business, madam ; how then ?" to which Volumnia's reply is, "Had I a dozen sons, each in my love alike, and none less dear than thine and my good Marcius, I had rather had eleven die nobly for their country than one voluptuously surfeit out of action." Volumnia thinks first of her son's glory ; Virgilia thinks first of her husband's peril. Marcius's absence from home, even though he is gone on a patriotic mission, fills Virgilia with melancholy and makes her sad. "I pray you, daughter, sing ; or express yourself in a more comfortable sort", says Volumnia to Virgilia. Seeing Virgilia's mood, Volumnia says to Valeria, "Let her alone, lady ; as she is now, she will but disease our better mirth." Volumnia can be mirthful during Marcius's absence while Virgilia is determined not even to leave her house in order to make a social call or to join the company of other ladies :

> *Valeria* : Come, lay aside your stitchery ; I must have you play the idle housewife with me this afternoon.
>
> *Virgilia* : No, good madam ; I will not out of doors.
>
> *Valeria* : Not out of doors !
>
> *Volumnia* : She shall, she shall.
>
> *Virgilia* : Indeed, no, by your patience ; I'll not over the threshold till my lord return from the wars.

Later in the play, Menenius asks if Marcius is returning from the Volscian war wounded or not wounded. Virgilia's reaction to this question shows her essential femininity while that of Volumnia shows the latter's essential masculinity :

> *Menenius* : Is he not wounded ? He was wont to come home wounded.
>
> *Virgilia* : O, no, no, no.
>
> *Volumnia* : O, he is wounded ; I thank the gods for't.

In the same scene Virgilia expresses a doubt about Marcius's success in the wars while Volumnia dismisses that doubt with a shrug and expresses a certainty about the warrior's success :

> *Volumnia* : In troth, there's wondrous things spoke of him.

Menenius : Wondrous ! ay, I warrant you, and not without his true purchasing.

Virgilia : The gods grant them true !

Volumnia : True ! pow, wow.

Volumnia's boastful pride in her son, again, is contrasted with Virgilia's modesty in talking about her son. When Lady Valeria refers to Virgilia's son as 'a noble child', Virgilia modestly says, "A crack, madam." Volumnia, in her place, would have embarked upon an elaborate description of the qualities and potentialities of the son.

Virgilia, again, is prone to tears. When Marcius returns from the Volscian campaign, tears flow from Virgilia's eyes, a reaction quite different from that of Volumnia. Seeing his wife's tears, Coriolanus says :

> Wouldst thou have laugh'd had I come coffin'd home,
> That *weep'st* to see me triumph !

Yet, there is a certain firmness in Virgilia, too ; and this firmness might have developed but for the overbearing presence of Volumnia. For instance, though pressed hard by Lady Valeria and also by Volumnia, Virgilia yet refuses to leave her house during the absence of her husband :

Valeria : Prithee, Virgilia, turn thy solemness out o' door, and go along with us.

Virgilia : No, at a word, madam ; indeed, I must not.

A similar firmness she shows in compelling Sicinius to hear Volumnia's taunts :

Virgilia : (To Sicinius) You shall stay too.

Something of this firmness is seen in her echoing Volumnia's challenge to Coriolanus when the latter pays no heed to his mother's appeals to pardon Rome. Volumnia, in desperation, says that Coriolanus will no sooner march to assault his country than to tread on his mother's womb which brought him forth into this world. And Virgilia adds that he will no sooner march to assault his country than to tread on his wife's womb which brought forth his son into the world to keep his name alive. All Virgilia's love for, and devotion to, her husband gives way here to her own and her mother-in law's patriotic fervour.

Virgilia's firmness, however, is at best a sporadic firmness and is more or less derived from Volumnia rather than something native to her own nature. Her general disposition is best described in the phrase, "My gracious silence" with which Coriolanus greets her on his return from the Volscian campaign. She is "gracious" and she is "silent" by nature. She hardly speaks fifty lines in the play and yet her gracious nature is fully revealed to us. Coriolanus is deeply in love with this lady and shows her all the esteem she deserves. In the interview at the gates of Rome he addresses her as the "best of my flesh" and asks for a kiss from her in the following words :

O, a kiss
Long as my exile, sweet as my revenge !
Now by the jealous queen of heaven, that kiss
I carried from thee, dear, my true lip
Hath virgin'd it e'er since.

The sight of Virgilia always touches the tender strain in Coriolanus's war-like nature. His heart always melts with love and softens with affection to see her. Indeed, she gives to the play almost its only touch of tenderness. Although she speaks but little and although her role is unimportant, yet the drama would lose something if she were not there. Throughout she presents a contrast to her mother-in-law. "The two women in Marcius's life are a formidable contrast, reminiscent almost of the good and evil angels who in earlier plays sometimes tussle for a man's soul. Volumnia, the mother has created Marcius. She is a natural virago and exults in the bloody triumph of her only son, but she is also his evil angel. She has brought him up to despise all occupations but the soldier's and to measure men solely by their crude skill in arms. Virgilia, by contrast, cares nothing for the triumphs, or the crowns of oak leaves. Until her man comes back safe, she will sit at home gently weeping over his absence. It is surprising that Marcius should have married such a woman but, as is abundantly clear in the later scenes, while he respects and fears his redoubtable mother, he loves his wife most tenderly".

(*v*) TULLUS AUFIDIUS

The first quality of Aufidius that is made known to us is his valour. This is how Marcius speaks of the Volscians having

a leader by the name of Tullus Aufidius :

"They have a leader,
Tullus Aufiidius, that will put you to't.
I sin in envying his nobility ;
And were I anything but what I am,
I would wish me only he."

In other words, Marcius admires Aufidius for the latter's nobility. And he goes on to say, "He is a lion that I am proud to hunt".

When we meet Aufidius himself, the opinion we have already formed about him is confirmed. We find Aufidius chiding the senators of Corioli for their failure to keep their plans a secret :

"What ever have been thought on in this state,
That could be brought to bodily act ere Rome
Had circumvention."

He tells the senators that their negligence in keeping their "great pretences veiled" will prove a great handicap to him in pursuing his enterprise against Rome. It is obvious that with his nobility and valour Aufidius combines a certain shrewdness. One of the senators thereupon says :

"Noble Aufidius,
Take your commission ; hie you to your bands."

Aufidius is to the Volscians what Coriolanus is to Rome in so far as the war between the Volscians and the Romans is concerned. Each is looked upon by his countrymen and by the senators of his country as their hero, as their saviour, and as their bravest warrior. Each, again, has an ardent desire to fight and defeat the other. Says Aufidius :

"If we and Caius Marcius chance to meet,
'Tis sworn between us we shall ever strike
Till one can do no more."

When Aufidius meets Marcius on the battlefield, the two exchange words of hatred and defiance :

Marcius : I'll fight with none but thee : for I do hate thee
Worse than a promise-breaker.

Aufidius : We hate alike :
Not Afric owns a serpent I abhor
More than thy fame and envy. Fix thy foot.

Marcius : Let the first budger die the other's slave,
And the gods doom him after.
Aufidius : If I fly, Marcius,
Hulloa me like a hare.

In the battle of words, Aufidius is quite a match for Marcius, but in the actual fighting, Marcius proves the better warrior. Aufidius, talking to one of his soldiers, confesses Marcius's superiority to him as a fighter. On all occasions that they have fought, Aufidius has been worsted :

Five times, Marcius,
I have fought with thee ; so often hast thou beat me ;
And wouldst do so, I think, should we encounter
As often as we eat.

Aufidius is convinced that he cannot vanquish Marcius in fair fight. But his envy and hatred of Marcius are so intense that he resolves to kill his adversary by whatever means possible. His envy and hatred of Marcius get the better of his sense of honour as a soldier and, feeling desperate, he decides to kill his foe at any cost. He realizes that in thus making up his mind he is throwing honour to the winds but he cannot help doing so :

"Mine emulation
Hath not that honour in't it had, for where
I thought to crush him in an equal force,
True sword to sword, I'll potch at him some way
Or wrath or craft may get him."

And in the same vein, he goes on :

Nor sleep, nor sanctuary,
Being naked, sick, nor fane nor capitol,
The prayers of priests nor times of sacrifice,
Embarquements all of fury, shall lift up
Their rotten privilege and custom 'gainst
My hate to Marcius : where I find him, were it
At home, upon my brother's guard, even there,
Against the hospitable canon, would I
Wash my fierce hand in's heart.

Indeed, Aufidius's wrath, fury, fierceness, and jealousy could not find a more effective or eloquent expression. His verses here throb with a violence of emotion that is rare.

However, when Marcius comes to Aufidius for refuge, Aufidius seems to forget his jealousy and his wrath, and welcomes his sworn enemy with open arms :

O Marcius, Marcius !
Each word thou hast spoke hath weeded from my heart
A root of ancient envy
... ...
... ... Let me twine
Mine arms about thy body, ...

Aufidius becomes as eloquent in his words of welcome as he previously was in his expression of hatred. It seems that his patriotism and his joy at his sworn enemy's offer to join him in destroying Rome have completely overwhelmed his antagonism to Marcius. He addresses Marcius as "most absolute sir", and goes so far as to offer him one half of his commission. He even allows Marcius to use the strategy and to follow the line of attack that Marcius thinks best. He concludes his speech thus :

A thousand welcomes !
And more a friend than e'er an enemy
Yet, Marcius, that was much. Your hand : most welcome.

That is a transformation, indeed. But not the final transformation. Another transformation is yet to come before the play ends. This enthusiasm and the new-born goodwill are again to change into a fierce hatred, jealousy and enmity. Craft, cunning and hypocrisy will be joined to that hatred and enmity in order to bring about the final downfall of Marcius. Aufidius discovers, as the campaign against Rome makes progress, that his own soldiers have become more devoted to Marcius than they were to him. He finds also that Marcius, who had offered himself as a faithful ally, is becoming stiff and proud. His lieutenant informs him that he is being eclipsed in the eyes of his soldiers by the performance of Marcius, whereupon Aufidius says :

"He bears himself more proudlier,
Even to my person, than I thought he would
When first I did embrace him."

Jealousy once again raises its ugly head in the breast of Aufidius. Once again, he begins to hate the man who seems to be superseding him. But he would not try to curb his enemy yet. Let Marcius conquer Rome and then circumstances combined with Marcius's own nature will so shape the situation as to make Marcius's downfall easy :

"Yet he hath left undone
That which shall break his neck or hazard mine,
Whene'er we come to our account."

And

"So our virtues
Lie in the interpretation of the time ;
And power, unto itself most commendable,
Hath not a tomb so evident as a chair
To extol what it hath done.
One fire drives out one fire ; one nail, one nail ;
Rights by rights falter ; strengths by strengths do fail.
Come, let's away. When Caius, Rome is thine,
Thou art poors't of all ; then shortly art thou mine."

From now on, Aufidius is on the look-out for a suitable opportunity to crush the rival who is blissfully ignorant of the designs of Aufidius. No code of ethics or morality can condone the subsequent conduct of Aufidius. When Marcius gives way to his mother's appeals, Aufidius hypocritically says, "I was moved withal." His true feelings on this occasion he thus expresses to himself :

"I am glad thou hast set thy mercy and thy honour
At difference in thee : out of that I'll work
Myself a former virtue."

Aufidius now sets aside the claims of that patriotism which had prompted him to accept Marcius as an ally and a friend. Now under the cloak of patriotism, he will wreak his personal vengeance upon Marcius. Back to Antium, Aufidius hatches a plot to assassinate Marcius. He thinks that Marcius has misused his kindness and friendliness and feels like a man "by his own alms empoisoned, and with his charity slain." "I know it, and my pretext to strike at him admits a good construction", he says, with reference to the scheme that he has formed in his mind. Has not Marcius received all possible help from Aufidius and has Marcius not become so proud that :

"till at the last
I seem'd his follower, not partner, and
He waged me with his countenance, as if
I had been mercenary ?"

The pretext he has for striking at Marcius is that Marcius yielded to the entreaties and tears of his mother and his wife and retreated from his original resolution to destroy Rome. Only by bringing about the death of Marcius can Aufidius re-establish his own supreme position :

"There was it ;
For which my sinews shall be stretch'd upon him
At a few drops of women's rheum, which are
As cheap as lies, he sold the blood and labour
Of our great action : therefore shall he die,
And I'll renew me in his fall."

Claims of personal prestige and of the country's honour are mixed in this speech to justify the planned assassination of Marcius. Thus, when Coriolanus returns and greets the lords of Antium, Aufidius urges the lords not to read the terms of Coriolanus's treaty with Rome as Coriolanus has betrayed them (the lords) :

Read it not, noble lords ;
But tell the traitor, in the highest degree
He hath abused your powers.

and

You lords and heads o' the state, perfidiously
He has betray'd your business, and given up,
For certain drops of salt, your city Rome.

When Coriolanus appeals to Mars, Aufidius insults him by calling him "thou boy of tears !" A few moments later Aufidius gives the signal to his fellow conspirators who kill Coriolanus while Aufidius stands on the body of the murdered Roman hero. Aufidius's sense of triumph is, however, short-lived, because soon he is filled with regret and remorse :

My rage is gone,
And I am struck with sorrow. Take him up :
Help, three O' the chiefest soldiers. I'll be one.
Beat thou the drum, that it speak mournfully :

Trail your steel pikes. Though in this city he
Hath widow'd and unchilded many a one,
Which to this hour bewail the injury,
Yet he shall have a noble memory.

These words of Aufidius do, to a certain extent, make amends for his act of murder and do extenuate his guilt of assassination.

(vi) THE TRIBUNES—BRUTUS AND SICINIUS

The most important or the most glaring quality of the two tribunes—Brutus and Sicinius—from the dramatic point of view is their jealousy and hatred of Caius Marcius. The pride and arrogance of Marcius are intolerable to them. They are the representatives, the spokesman, and the custodians of the interests of the commoners and, in that capacity, they think it their duty to protect the people against the growing power of Marcius :

Sicinius : Was ever man so proud as is this Marcius ?
Brutus : He has no equal.
Sicinius : When we were chosen tribunes for the people—
Brutus : Mark'd you his lip and eyes ?
Sicinius : Nay, but his taunts.

They have observed Marcius's contempt for them and they are not slow to strike at him when the opportunity comes. When Sicinius asks how the proud Marcius has agreed to be commanded by Cominius, Brutus attributes to Marcius a motive which is completely absent from Marcius's mind. If anything miscarries in the war, says Brutus, the blame will rest on the shoulders of Cominius ; if things go well, the credit will go to Marcius who has a great reputation as a soldier :

Half all Cominius's honours are to Marcius,
Though Marcius earn'd them not ; and all his faults
To Marcius shall be honours, though indeed
In aught he merit not.

We here perceive the malice and the grudge the tribunes bear towards Marcius. They say that in going to the Volscian war, Marcius is prompted more by a desire to earn fame than by a desire to serve his country, and that in order to win fame he has even accepted a subordinate position under Cominius.

Menenius has a very low opinion of the tribunes. He describes them as "a brace of unmeriting, proud, violent, testy magistrates, alias fools, as any in Rome." According to him, the tribunes are "ambitious for poor knaves' caps and legs ;" they have no judicial ability and would therefore adjourn the hearing of a petty dispute to a second day of audience. "When you are hearing a matter between party and party", says Menenius, "if you chance to be pinched with the colic, you make faces like mummers ; set up the bloody flag against all patience ; and, roaring, dismiss the controversy bleeding, the more entangled by your hearing : all the peace you make in their cause is, calling both the parties knaves. You are a pair of strange ones." This, if true, is a very ugly picture of the tribunes and their magisterial functions, and considerably lowers them in our opinion. It must, however, be admitted that the tribunes are not slow-witted or lacking in the power to make a retort. This is what Brutus says in reply to the speech of Menenins above quoted, "Come, come, you are well understood to be a perfecter giber for the table than a necessary bencher in the Capitol." Brutus, too, shows a talent for vivid description. His description of the tumultuous reception given to Coriolanus on the latter's return to Rome from the Volscian war is masterly in its vividness and eloquence :

Our veil'd dames
Commit the war of white and damask in
Their nicely-gawded cheeks to the wanton spoil
Of Phoebus' burning kisses : such a pother ;
As if that whatsoever god who leads him
Were slily crept into his human powers,
And gave him graceful posture.

The tribunes provide ample evidence of being a pair of crafty, subtle, deliberate, cool-headed intriguers. Their plan to bring about the downfall of Coriolanus is well-laid and proves successful. They know the hot temper of Coriolanus and are able to provoke him to rash and reckless utterance when it suits them to do so. They cleverly and effectively instigate the people against Coriolanus and succeed even in prevailing upon them to revoke the votes with which they have already elected him the consul. Realising that Coriolanus's consulship will mean complete extinction of their own authority, they decide to

remind the people of Coriolanus's dictatorial nature and Coriolanus's indifference to the interests of the commoners. Says Brutus to his colleague :

> We must suggest the people in what hatred
> He still hath held them ; that to's power he would
> Have made them mules, silenced their pleaders and
> Dispropertied their freedoms ; holding them,
> In human action and capacity,
> Of no more soul nor fitness for the world
> Than camels in the war........................

That is to say, the tribunes will emphasize the worst side of Coriolanus in order to alienate him from the people and will conveniently ignore Coriolanus's good qualities such as his valour and his services to the country. When, at the height of his fame, Coriolanus is presented to the senate, Brutus strikes a discordant note by saying that Coliolanus would deserve all honour from the senate "if he remember a kinder value of the people than he hath hereto prized them at." When Coriolanus requests the senate to be allowed to omit the custom of seeking people's votes for consulship, Sicinius is quick to say :

> Sir, the people
> Must have their voices ; neither will they bate
> One jot of ceremony.

When Coriolanus, after "discharging the custom" of seeking votes, has been elected consul, the tribunes lose no time in instigating the people against him. The cue for this instigation is provided by one of the citizens themselves when he says that Coriolanus treated the voters with scorn and mockery even while he was seeking their votes. "Was not this mockery ?" says a citizen. And, taking the cue, Sicinius says to the crowd of citizens :

> Why, either were you ignorant to see't,
> Or, seeing it, of such childish friendliness
> To yield your voices.

After this reproachful remark, the two tribunes speak to the crowd alternately, each reinforcing and strengthening the effect produced by the other. Brutus asks the citizens why they did not tell Coriolanus that he was the enemy of the people and that he had always spoken against their liberties and freedoms.

Sicinius says that, if the citizens had told Coriolanus all that, Coriolanus would either have given them a gracious promise to treat them kindly in future or have lost his temper and thus exposed his real nature. Brutus then reminds the citizens of the contempt with which Coriolanus asked for their votes. Sicinius scolds them for having bestowed their "sued-for tongues" on a mocker. Brutus next suggests that they should all go and tell other citizens that the new consul will take from them their liberties and will "make them of no more voice than dogs that are as often beat for barking as therefore kept to do so." Sicinius urges a larger meeting of the citizens in order to revoke their "ignorant election." Brutus advises them to lay a fault on the tribunes and not to spare the tribunes as long as they can make sure of revoking the election. Sicinius supports his colleague in this move :

> Say, you chose him
> More after our commandment than as guided
> By your own true affections.

The tribunes succeed in stirring up the mutiny they had aimed at. They have employed unscrupulous methods ; they have uttered falsehoods ; they have duped the people and slandered Coriolanus ; but they have gained their purpose.

Nor do the ignoble efforts of the tribunes end here. We are not surprised to hear the opinion of Coriolanus about this pair of villains :

> Behold, these are the tribunes of the people,
> The tongues o' the common mouth : I do despise them ;
> For they do prank them in authority,
> Against all noble sufferance.

But Coriolanus does not yet know how strong the tribunes have become. Coriolanus is stunned when Sicinius says, "Pass no further". When he asks what the matter is, Brutus replies : "It will be dangerous to go: no further". Coriolanus then says that "It is a purposed thing, and grows by plot." Brutus tells a lie in replying, "Call't not a plot", though there is much truth in his saying that Coriolanus mocked the people, refused to give them corn gratis, and called the people time-pleasers, flatterers, etc. When Coriolanus gets heated by Brutus's words, Brutus says :

You speak o' the people,
As if you were a god to punish, not
A man of their infirmity.

And Sicinius adds :

'Twere well,
We let the people know't.

We must admit that the tribunes are bold enough to dare to speak to Coriolanus in this manner. Coriolanus shows his contempt by calling Sicinius "this Triton of the minnows". Sicinius, then, referring to some of the speeches of Coriolanus made on this occasion, calls Coriolanus a traitor and declares that Coriolanus "shall answer as traitors do." Brutus says that Coriolanus's utterances are "manifest treason" and Sicinius adds "This is a consul ? no". Brutus then calls upon an Aedile to arrest Coriolanus. This is daring, indeed. Sicinius shows an even greater daring by saying that he himself will arrest Coriolanus as a "traitorous innovator." The situation becomes very tense. A crowd of citizens appear on the scene. Sicinius thus incites the people :

You are at point to lose your liberties :
Marcius would have all from you ; Marcius,
Whom late you have named for consul.

This is a fabrication because Marcius had made no such move. Brutus goes on to suggest the sentence of death against Marcius and Sicinius grimly adds :

Therefore lay hold of him ;
Bear him to the rock Tarpeian, and from thence
Into destruction cast him.

A little later, when the nobles have withdrawn from the scene, Sicinius thus vents his venom against Marcius :

Where is this viper,
That would depopulate the city, and
Be every man himself ?

When Menenius refers to Marcius as the consul, Sicinius asks "Consul ! What consul ?" and Brutus exclaims, "He consul !" to which the citizens relpy, "No, no, no, no, no." The tribunes have the citizens solidly behind them and will not relent now that they have gone thus far. "He's a disease

that must be cut away'', says Sicinius and Brutus adds :

> We'll hear no more.
> Pursue him to his house, and pluck him thence ;
> Lest his infection, being of catching nature,
> Spread further.

These two tribunes are very well-matched, well-paired, because each echoes the other.

At the insistence of Menenius, the tribunes soften somewhat, but their original purpose remains inflexible. Brutus confers with Sicinius and they decide to accuse Marcius publicly of (i) tyrannical power, (ii) being hostile to the people, and (iii) of not distributing the spoils which were gathered during the Volscian war. The third charge, it is to be noted, is a pure fabrication. Through an Aedile, Sicinius sends certain instructions to the crowd of citizens in order to ensure that they will support any proposal that he might make for the punishment of Marcius. This is unabashed plotting, and unscrupulous intrigue. Brutus fully approves of the instructions given. He suggests to his colleague that the best course to damn Marcius will be to provoke and anger him because in that mood Marcius will speak bluntly and arrogantly to the people and thus infuriate them :

> Put him to choler straight.........
> ......being once chafed, he cannot
> Be rein'd again to temperance.

This is the extremist devilry. The tribunes are gaining their purpose by a double exploitation, exploitation of the people's trust in them and exploitation of the weakness of Marcius. When a discussion begins again, with the citizens present to hear the issues involved, Sicinius calls Marcius a "traitor to the people'', whereupon, as was anticipated by the tribunes, Marcius loses his temper completely, and Sicinius suggests the punishment of death, which sentence, however, he reduces to banishment from Rome. Never once do these deliberate plotters, the tribunes, lose their temper. They always provoke Marcius into a rage, without themselves being provoked by anything that Marcius may say to them or about them. Relentlessly they pursue their intrigue,

always winning the support of the people by talking of their liberties, rights and privileges and always depicting Marcius as enemy to the people and as a traitor to Rome. They are consummate villains, indeed, these tribunes. They are revengeful, and they are ignoble in their revenge. They are crafty, and they damn Marcius with Marcius's own openness and pride. They are practical in their approach to the problem that is before them. They are men of action and are able to translate their evil designs into reality. And both of them are very effective and very eloquent speakers who sway the crowd with their plausible arguments and their rhetoric.

But they have some redeeming features, too. They may not love Marcius, but they do love Rome and the Roman people. The people, too, have a genuine affection for them. The following dialogue between the tribunes and a few citizens in Act IV scene vi is significant in this connection :

Citizens : The gods preserve you both !
Sicinius : God-den, our neighbours.
Brutus : God-den to you all, god-den to you all.
First Citizen : Ourselves, our wives, and children, on our knees
Are bound to pray for you both.
Sicinius : Live, and thrive !
Brutus : Farewell, kind neighbours : we wish'd Coriolanus had loved you as we did.
Citizens : And the gods help you !
Both Tribunes : Farewell, farewell.

There is no hypocrisy in this dialogue on either side. The tribunes show a certain dignity, too, when news of a new danger from the Volscians headed by Marcius is received. Says Sicinius to the people :

Go, masters, get you home ; be not dismay'd :
..................Go home,
And show no sign of fear.

Again, the tribunes feel a real anxiety when they learn about Marcius's threat to destroy Rome. They argue Menenius into agreeing to go to Marcius and plead for mercy to Rome.

Sicinius says, "Pray you, go to him." Brutus says, "Only make trial of what your love can do for Rome." That the tribunes are essentially patriotic and also democratic cannot be doubted. Shakespeare has not made them utterly base. "The tribunes are skilful politicians, and unattractive figures ....But on the practical side, they were doubtless right where their great antagonist was wrong ; and it is only justice to remark that in the moment of their triumph they show no vulgar exultation, and maintain a rather fine dignity under a storm of abuse."

(vii) THE ROMAN PEOPLE, OR, CITIZENS ; OR, THE ROMAN MOB

What strikes us most about the Roman people in *Coriolanus* is their passionate enmity towards the patricians as a class and towards Cauis Marcius as an individual who by his uncompromising hostility towards the people has made himself the special mark of their hatred and antagonism. This trait of the Roman people is revealed to us unmistakably in the very opening scene. The play opens with the mutinous citizens carrying staves, clubs, and other weapons, determined to revenge themselves on the patricians, and on Caius Marcius first of all :

First citizen : First you know Cauis Marcius is chief enemy to the people.

All. We know't, we know't.

First Citizen : Let us kill him, and we'll have corn at our own price.

The First Citizen having obtained the support of the crowd for his proposal goes on to voice his grievance thus : "We are accounted poor citizens, the patricians, good. What authority surfeits on would relieve us : if they would yield us but the superfluity while it were wholesome, we might guess they relieved us humanely ; but think they we are too dear ......Let us revenge this with our pikes, ere we become pikes." The citizens, it is clear, have a good and sufficient reason for mutiny. The First Citizen thus concludes the speech quoted above : "for the gods know I speak this in hunger for bread, not in thirst for revenge." As for Caius Marcius, the feeling

of the whole crowd with one exception is that "he's a very dog to the commonalty." When Menenius appears on the scene, the First Citizen thus states his position vis-a-vis the patricians and there seems to be much truth in what he says : "Care for us ! True, indeed ! They ne'er cared for us yet : suffer us to famish, and their store-houses crammed with grain ; make edicts for usury, to support usurers ; repeal daily any wholesome act established against the rich, and provide more piercing statutes daily, to chain up and restrain the poor. If the war eat us not up, they will ; and there's all the love they bear us."

But though the people have reason for mutiny, there is reason for Marcius's contempt for them. Marcius's description of the Roman people is noteworthy. This is how he addresses them when he finds them in a mutinous temper :

What would you have, you curs,
That like nor peace nor war ? the one affrights you,
The other makes you proud. He that trusts to you,
Where he should find you lions, finds you hares,
Where foxes, geese : you are no surer, no,
Than is the coal of fire upon the ice,
Or hailstone in the sun. Your virtue is
To make him worthy whose offence subdues him
And curse that justice did it. Who deserves greatness
Deserves your hate ; and your affections are
A sick man's appetite, who desires most that
Which would increase his evil. He that depends
Upon your favours swims with fins of lead
And hews down oaks with rushes. Hang you ! Trust ye ?
With every minute you do change a mind,
And call him noble that was now your hate,
Him vile that was your garland.

Thus Marcius charges the people with being cowardly and mean, unreliable and untrustworthy, inconstant and fickle, lacking in proper judgment, unable to appreciate greatness or

justice, and stupid. There may be exaggeration in this description but, allowing for exaggeration, Marcius's assessment reveals to us the essential characteristics of the Roman people. Marcius continues his assessment of them in the following manner :

> They'll sit by the fire, and presume to know
> What's done i' the Capitol ; who's like to rise,
> Who thrives and who declines ; side factions and give out
> Conjectural marriages.

Marcius adds the charges of political ignorance and idle political gossip and speculation to the previous indictment. Nor can we ignore Menenius's opinion of the Roman people:

> For though they abundantly lack discretion,
> Yet are they passing cowardly.

Menenius believes that the people are lacking in both discretion and courage. The charge of stupidity against them is proved when a crowd of people in another part of the city throw their caps in the air after their complaints have been answered and a petition for the appointment of tribunes has been granted to them. The charge of cowardice is proved when the crowd, whom Marcius has severely rebuked, disperses on being asked "to go get you home, you fragments." And yet they had come determined to kill Marcius. It was an idle boast for the First Citizen to have said that the people would show that "poor suitors have strong breaths" and that they had "strong arms too". The fickle-mindedness or inconstancy of the Roman crowd and their lack of independent thinking are clearly revealed to us when the time for the election of the consul of Rome comes. The voters discuss among themselves whether they should give their votes to Marcius and the majority of them feel that they should elect Marcius in recognition of his services to the country. This is how the Third Citizen puts the case : "For if he show us his wounds and tell us his deeds, we are to put our tongues into those wounds and speak for them ; so, if he tell us his noble deeds, we must also tell him our noble acceptance of them. Ingratitude is monstrous."

In other words, not to vote for Marcius would be ungrateful. The Third Citizen also says, "I say, if he would incline to the people, there never was a worthier man." That is, Marcius is fitted for the office of the consul in every respect except in so far as he does not love the people enough. The Fourth Citizen frankly speaks to Marcius: "You have been a scourge to her (country's) enemies, you have been a rod to her friends; you have not indeed loved the common people." In spite of Marcius's want of love for the common people and in spite of his bantering and ironical tone while seeking votes, the people do vote for him and elect him as the consul:

Sixth Citizen: He has done nobly, and cannot go without any honest man's voice.

Seventh Citizen: Therefore let him be consul; the gods give him joy, and make him good friend to the people!

All: Amen, amen. God save thee, noble consul! The matter should have rested here and the people should have waited to see what kind of a consul Marcius would make. They should have given him a fair trial. But, after listening to their tribunes, they change their minds and go back upon their word. It is true that the voice of discontent comes from the citizens themselves, as the following dialogue shows:

Second Citizen: To my poor unworthy notice, he mock'd us when he begg'd our voices.

Third Citizen: Certainly he flouted us downright.

First Citizen: No 'tis his kind of speech; he did not mock us.

Second Citizen: Not one amongst us, save yourself, but says he used us scornfully.

The Third Citizen goes on to describe the ironical and scornful manner in which Marcius treated the voters and concludes: "Was not this mockery?"

But this discontent would soon have died down if the tribunes had not made a strenuous effort to inflame the crowd. Under the powerful effect of the speeches of the tribunes, the

people swerve to the other extreme and decide to revoke the election. They allow themselves to be tutored by the Aediles (acting under the instructions of the tribunes), and shout their full support to Sicinius, first when he pronounces the sentence of death upon Coriolanus and, then, when he reduces the sentence to banishment. "To the rock, to the rock with him !" shout the citizens, echoing the words of Sicinius. And later, "It shall be so, it shall be so ; let him away : He's banished, and it shall be so", when Sicinius declares that Coriolanus should be banished from Rome. This is, of course, complete surrender on the part of the people to the judgment of their tribunes. They have suspended their own judgment in deference to the wishes of the tribunes. In spite of their deep hostility to Coriolanus, the people showed their awareness and their recognition of Coriolanus's heroic deeds by electing him to the consulship ; but the people did not have sufficient judgment nor toleration to resist the advice of their tribunes not only to take away from him what they had given him but to go so far as to banish him from Rome.

It would be wrong, however, to think that Shakespeare has painted the people in the darkest colours. Something, indeed, can be said for the people, too. Their mutiny in the opening scene has solid grounds. Nor are they at any stage blind to the valour and heroism of Marcius. A certain amount of intelligence, too, is perceptible among the people. In the course of Menenius's narrative of the belly, the First Citizen shows a certain mental alertness when he says to Menenius, "You must not think to fob off our disgrace with a tale." The First Citizen contributes picturesque touches of his own to Menenius's story and presses repeatedly for a conclusion. The First Citizen, too, comments gruffly on Menenius's prolixity. Again, when the time for the election of the consul comes, the Third Citizen urges his comrades not to show ingratitude towards Marcius. "Ingratitude is monstrous : and for the multitude to be ingrateful, were to make a monster the multitude; of the which we being members, should bring ourselves to be monstrous members." This is a remark which not only reveals a commendable recognition of the need for showing gratitude towards Marcius, but also shows a turn for a humorous play upon words. A sense of humour is also seen in the following observation of the Third Citizen,"......

and truly I think, that if all our wits were to issue out of one skull, they would fly east, west, north, south and their consent of one direct way should be at once to all the points o' the compass." The Second Citizen asks, "Think you so ? Which way do you judge my wit would fly ?" And the Third Citizen makes the following joke, "Nay, your wit will not so soon out as another man's will ; 'tis strongly wedged up in a blockhead ; but if it were at liberty, 'twould, sure, southward." On being asked why his wit would fly southward, the Third Citizen says, "To lose itself in a fog ; where being three parts melted away with rotten dews, the fourth would return for conscience sake, to help to get thee a wife." And the Second Citizen replies, "You are never without your tricks : you may, you may." Nor are the citizens so stupid as not to see through Coriolanus's sarcastic manner when he is seeking the people's votes. Having observed the ironical and scornful manner of Coriolanus, the Third Citizen says, "But this is something odd", to which the Second Citizen adds, "An't were to give again,—but 'tis no matter." In other words, the Second Citizen feels that it was a mistake to have voted for Coriolanus. Talking to the tribunes, the Third Citizen aptly describes Coriolanus's manner of seeking votes and correctly asks, "Was not this mockery ?"

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS

(A) Questions on plot

Q. 1. Write a brief summary of the opening scene of *Coriolanus*, and add a note on its dramatic importance.

Ans. The opening scene of *Coriolanus* shows a crowd of Roman citizens, armed with staves, clubs and other weapons, in a mutinous mood. The citizens are full of anger against the patricians in general, and against Caius Marcius in particular. They are facing a corn famine and they feel that the patricians are doing nothing to afford them relief. Their anger is particularly directed against Caius Marcius who, in their opinion, is the enemy of the people and "a very dog to the commonalty". They recognise his services to the country, but they believe that he performed his brave deeds "to please his mother and to be partly proud." In their anger, they resolve to put an end to the life of Caius Marcius.

Menenius appears on the scene and tries to pacify the mutinous crowd. The crowd feels much respect for this patrician, whose love for the people and whose honesty they do not doubt. They are, therefore, ready to discuss the situation with him. Menenius tells them that the patricians are like fathers to the commoners and that the responsibility for the famine rests upon the gods and not upon the patricians ; but the citizens accuse the patricians of indifference and callousness towards them. Menenius replies with his fable of the belly. He tells the crowd that, on one occasion all the body's members rebelled against the belly and accused it of swallowing all the food without doing any work and without exerting itself in any way. The belly replied, Menenius goes on to say, that it was only a storehouse of the whole body and that it supplied nourishment to all other organs and members of the body. Menenius compares the senators and the patricians of Rome to the serviceable belly, and the mutinous citizens of Rome to the rebellious organs of the human body. Caius Marcius now appears and, on seeing the mutinous crowd, rebukes them in harsh terms. He calls them

"dissentious rogues", and accuses them of cowardice, ignorance, inconstancy, lack of judgment, and stupidity. Marcius informs Menenius that he has already scattered the rebellious crowd in the other part of the city after they had been granted their petition to have tribunes of their own choice to safeguard their interests. After Marcius has rebuked the crowd of citizens, they disperse. News comes that the Volscians are up in arms against Rome. Marcius informs the senators that the Volscians are commanded by a general by the name of Aufidius who is a man of undoubted valour and who is looked upon by Marcius as his sworn enemy. It is decided that Cominius should command the Roman forces and that Marcius and Lartius should attend upon him.

The opening scene ends with a dialogue between Sicinius and Brutus, the two tribunes. They criticise Marcius for being proud and for his contempt towards them and towards the people.

Dramatic importance : The opening scenes of Shakespeare's plays have been highly praised for their dramatic importance and for containing in germ the major developments of the respective plays. This is true also of the opening scene of *Coriolanus*. One of the major developments of this play is the conflict between the patrician Marcius and the Roman plebeians, which ends in the banishment of Marcius. The opening scene informs us of that conflict. The danger that faces Marcius from the commoners is made quite clear in the opening scene. Another important development in the play is the hostility between Marcius and Aufidius. The opening scene acquaints us with that hostility also. Again, the opposition of the tribunes to Marcius is to play a vital part in his banishment. That opposition is clearly revealed to us in the very opening scene. The opening scene is important not only as regards plot-development, but also in respect of characterisation. The essential elements in the character of Marcius are clearly indicated in the opening scene. We are acquainted with the pride and egoism which will ultimately ruin him and the bravery and valour which will excite our sympathy for him. The opening scene introduces us also to Menenius who is a foil to Marcius. Menenius is a genial patrician with a talent for persuasive oratory and with a strong admiration for his class and for Caius Marcius.

We also become acquainted in the opening scene with the other important enemy of Marcius, namely, Aufidius who s to bring about the assassination of Marcius.

Q. 2. Write a brief account of the election of Marcius to the consulship and of his subsequent dismissal and banishment.

Ans. After the victorious return of the Roman forces from the Volscian war, Cominius gives to the Roman senate an eloquent account of Marcius's bravery and valour. The senators announce their decision to choose Marcius for the consulship and they ask him to go and seek the votes of the people. Marcius's pride does not allow him to humble himself before the people and he would, therefore, like to omit the custom of seeking the votes of the people in that traditional manner. The tribunes, however, insist that the custom must be observed, and Menenius urges Marcius to obey the custom.

Coriolanus, wearing the gown of humility, goes against his will to the forum to seek the votes of the people for the consulship. He asks for the votes of the citizens in a mocking, jeering manner. The people feel hurt by his manner, but they display a remarkable spirit of toleration and promise him their votes. Marcius then leaves the forum for the senate-house to claim the consulship.

The tribunes, however, are not happy at what has happened. They address the people and express their disapproval of the people's support to Marcius. The citizens themselves recall Marcius's mocking manner of asking for their votes. The tribunes tell the citizens that Marcius has always been an enemy to their interest, and they urge the citizens to rovoke the election. The tribunes are successful in their effort to inflame the people against Marcius, and the people agree to revoke the election.

Marcius, accompanied by the senators, is on his way to the forum when the tribunes stop them and announce that the temper of the citizens has changed and that the citizens are enraged with Marcius. Marcuis, accuses the tribunes of having brought about this change. "It is a purposed thing, and grows by plot", says Marcius. Marcius, addressing the senators, points out the dangers of allowing the commoners to have their way. He warns the senators that there will be utter confusion

in the city if they go on yielding to the will of the commoners. Sicinius says that the people will be duly informed of Marcius's anti-democratic speech. Marcius calls Sicinius "Triton of the minnows", and criticises him for his use of the absolute word 'shall'. Then Marcius urges the senators to wake up from their slumber and not to allow the tribunes to usurp the authority of the senators. The tribunes call Marcius a "traitor" and declare that Marcius is under arrest for being a "traitorous innovator" and a foe to the public weal. Marcius calls Sicinius "an old goat" and "a rotten thing", and declares that he will shake the bones of Sicinius. A crowd of citizens appear at this point. Brutus calls upon the officials to seize Marcius. The citizens support the tribunes and shout, "Down with him ! down with him!" Marcius is asked to yield to arrest but he draws his sword. There is a scuffle in which the tribunes and the people are pushed back. The tribunes say that Marcius shall be thrown down the Tarpeian rock to his death for being a traitor. Marcius, Cominius and some others withdraw from the scene. Menenius tries to plead with the tribunes, on behalf of Marcius, and says that Rome should not prove ungrateful to her bravest son. Menenius promises to bring Marcius to face the crowd and to answer the charges against him. This offer is accepted.

Marcius is in no mood to submit any explanation to the people. However, under pressure of the patricians and under the compulsion of his mother, he reluctantly agrees to go and to pacify the people. Meanwhile, the tribunes have tutored the citizens to support any proposal which the tribunes might make regarding the punishment to be awarded to Marcius.

Marcius, accompanied by senators and patricians, appears to face the crowd. Menenius explains that Coriolanus's rough manner of speaking does not show any ill-will towards the people but is just the roughness of a soldier. Coriolanus asks the crowd why, after having elected him to the consulship, they now wish to withdraw their support to him. Sicinius asserts that Coriolanus has tried to set himself up as a dictator and that he has proved a traitor to the people. Instead of replying to this charge and instead of arguing coolly with the crowd, Coriolanus at once loses his temper and becomes abusive and defiant. Sicinius says that Marcius's behaviour deserves extremest death but that, in view of Marcius's past services to the country, the

sentence of death should be reduced to banishment from the city of Rome. The citizens shout their support for this verdict. Cominius tries to intervene but the tribunes announce that there is no more to be said and that Marcius has been banished as an enemy to the people and to his country. Coriolanus feels enraged beyond measure. He utters curses on the people and on the tribunes, and says that he will quit the city because there is a lot of room for him elsewhere. The citizens follow him to see him out at the gates of the city.

Q. 3. Write a brief account of the way in which Volumnia prevails upon her son to desist from the destruction of Rome. *Or*

Write a brief summary of the scene in which Volumnia and other ladies of Rome succeed in their mission to prevent *Coriolanus* from implementing his resolve to destroy Rome.

Ans. Volumnia's interview with her son outside the gates of Rome where the Volscian army is camping is one of the most powerful and dramatic scenes in the play. Volumnia has brought Virgilia, Valeria, and the young son of Marcius, with her on her mission. Only a minute ago, Marcius has decided to receive no further embassies from Rome and thus to avoid all temptations to weaken in his resolve. But as soon as he sees the ladies of Rome and his young son, he finds himself weakening. "I melt, and am not of stronger earth than others", he says to himself. However, he makes an effort of the will and decides not to "be such a gosling to obey instinct". But the moment his wife speaks, he breaks down and becomes human. He asks for a kiss, "sweet as my revenge", from his wife. Then, remembering his mother, he kneels before her. To his wife he offers his love, and to his mother his duty.

Volumnia has never yielded to her son in the past, nor will she now. She has come to save Rome; at whatever cost, Coriolanus will obey her, and she will maintain her dominance by every trick and device known to mothers. First she kneels to him. Such a gesture from his mother fills Coriolanus with horror. Next she points to Valeria and to the young boy to both of whom Coriolanus speaks in a suitable manner, chivalrously to the lady, and invoking the favours of gods for his son. Coriolanus is weakening, but still refuses his mother's petition and asks her

not to try to allay his rages and revenges with her colder reasons. Volumnia's temper rises and she speaks to him bitterly. She insists upon asking him to give up his plan of revenge. If she fails in her purpose, the blame will rest upon his hardness. Coriolanus calls upon Aufidius and the Volsces to witness this interview so that he is not accused of having held a private talk with his mother.

Volumnia makes a speech charged with emotion. The mother, the wife, and the child are faced with a strange dilemma, says Volumnia. They can neither pray for a victory for Coriolanus nor pray for a victory to Rome. A victory for Coriolanus would mean the destruction and sacking of their beloved country. A victory for Rome would mean humiliation, degradation and death of the beloved son, husband, and father. But Volumnia finds that her words have produced no effect upon her son. With rising anger she says that he no sooner marches to assault his country than he will be treading on his mother's womb, and Virgilia adds, 'Ay, and mine''. But Coriolanus rises from his seat and prepares to leave, whereupon Volumnia again employs a tone of entreaty. She suggests that he should propose a treaty with Rome, whereby the prestige and honour of the Volscians do not suffer and whereby Rome is saved too. Let the Volscians dictate the terms which will enable them to declare, "This mercy we have show'd", and which will compel the Romans to admit : "This we received". Still finding no response from Coriolanus, she tells him that in the event of his attacking and destroying Rome his name will go down in history as that of an ignoble, dishonourable person. All his nobleness of nature will fail to condone his crime in destroying his own country, she says.

Coriolanus still remains unmoved. Thereupon Volumnia appeals to his filial affection. She reminds him of how every time he went to a war in the past she prayed for his safety and his glory. What has he ever done for her in return ? she asks. "Thou hast never in thy life show'd thy dear mother any courtesy", she tells him. But Coriolanus continues to be indifferent. Volumnia then tries to make him feel ashamed of himself, and kneels before him along with the other ladies. "Down, ladies ; let us shame him with our knees", says Volumnia, "Down : an

end ; this is the last : so we will to Rome, and die among our neighbours".

But Coriolanus does not budge from his position. At this point, Volumnia loses her temper completely. If Coriolanus will yield neither to reason nor to sentiment, he may yet be subdued by anger. She rises and with all her dignity and fury she lashes out at him. She accuses him of having a Volscian woman as his mother and of having a Volscian woman as his wife. It is a mere accident that the young boy resembles Coriolanus, because the boy is not Coriolanus's son, she says. She tells him that she will have something more to say after he has set fire to Rome. The rebuke has the desired effect. Coriolanus's resistance collapses and his determination gives way. He knows that his yielding to his mother's wishes will spell his own doom, but he sees no alternative.

Q. 4. Write a brief account of the scene in which Aufidius denounces Coriolanus and causes the latter's assassination. Add a brief comment on the dramatic quality of this scene.

Ans. Coriolanus, after making peace with Rome, returns to Antium and explains to the Volscian lords the terms of the treaty he has signed with Rome. This treaty, he says, is one that brings honour to the Volscians and shame to the Romans. Besides, the plunder he has brought is enough to cover more than one third of the whole cost of the campaign. He then offers the document containing the terms of the treaty to the lords for their perusal. But Aufidius intervenes, asking the lords not to read it and calling Coriolanus a traitor who has abused their powers.

Coriolanus is astonished at the use of the word traitor for him and asks in dismay, "Traitor ! how now !" "Ay, traitor, Marcius", replies Aufidius. Coriolanus is astounded to hear himself addressed as "Marcius" instead of as "Coriolanus". Aufidius tells him that "Coriolanus" is a stolen title which he does not deserve. He accuses Coriolanus of having betrayed the lords of Antium by giving up the city of Rome "for certain drops of salt" (meaning the tears of Roman ladies). He charges Coriolanus with having broken his oath and resolution "like a twist of rotten silk" and with having acted like a coward.

Coriolanus, in great distress at this unexpected outburst of Aufidius, says, "Hear'st thou Mars ?" But Aufidius insults him still further by asking him not to take the name of Mars (the god of wars), and by calling him a "boy of tears". Coriolanus, unable to believe his ears, says, "Ha !" But Aufidius reiterates his description of Coriolanus as a "boy of tears." Coriolanus is now stung to fury. He can bear no more. His wrath is stirred. He calls Aufidius a "measureless liar", and a "cur". He reminds Aufidius of the wounds that he has inflicted on Aufidius's body, wounds the marks of which can still be seen on his body. At the same time Coriolanus seeks the indulgence of the lords for having lost his temper. He then tactlessly goes on to refer to his own exploits in Corioli and the way he worked havoc in that city when he was at war with the Volscians. In his violent fit of anger, he has forgotten all reason. Aufidius utilizes this opportunity to his own advantage and asks the lords if they can tolerate this insult to the Volscians. The conspirators shout that Marcius should die for thus insulting the Volscians. The Volscian mob supports this proposal. "Tear him to pieces", says the mob remembering the slaughter of Volscians by Marcius when he had entered the city of Corioli single-handed and killed many citizens.

A lord tries to soothe the crowd but Coriolanus has lost the balance of his mind and cannot restrain himself. He hurls a fresh challenge at Aufidius, saying that he can fight against six Aufidiuses. Aufidius calls him an "insolent villain". At this point the conspirators pounce upon Coriolanus with drawn swords and murder him. Aufidius, in savage triumph, treads upon the dead body.

The dramatic quality of this scene : This is one of the most dramatic scenes in the play. We here see the daring and desperation of Aufidius who stakes everything on his effort to bring about the downfall of his rival. The character of Aufidius shows a further development in so far as we see another side of Aufidius's character, namely, his capacity for a public denunciation and his talent for rhetorical speech (this latter having been indicated on an earlier occasion also). Marcius's want of self-control is emphasised in this scene. It is exactly this want of self-control which brings about the

catastrophe of the play and which causes his ruin. The encounter between the two great warriors should prove highly exciting and dramatic on the stage, stirring several mingled feelings such as fear, awe, wonder, admiration, sympathy and pity in the hearts of the spectators.

Q. 5. Discuss Shakespeare's treatment of his source for the writing of *Coriolanus*.

Ans. Shakespeare took his material for the writing of *Coriolanus* from Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives*. Shakespeare had already used North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives* for writing two other plays, namely, *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, but both in those cases Shakespeare had taken much liberty with his source. That is, Shakespeare had considerably modified the material of his source in the writing of those two plays, to suit his own dramatic purpose while in respect of language Shakespeare's debt to North was very slight. But in the case of *Coriolanus*, Shakespeare did not permit himself this free hand. In fact, Shakespeare has in this case followed his source closely and continuously. A comparison of North's translation of the life of Coriolanus with the passages in Shakespeare's play shows that in this play Shakespeare is indebted to North for very much more than the bare details of the plot. Apart from borrowing events and incidents, Shakespeare has in several places borrowed the very language of North.

In spite of that, it must be recognised that Shakespeare had to mould his material to suit the needs of the dramatic form. Dramatic necessity forced Shakespeare firstly to compress the available historical matter ; secondly, to omit certain matters occurring in Plutarch, and, thirdly, to make certain additions to the available historical data.

Example of compression : Plutarch mentions two seditions or mutinies, one based on the high rate of interest charged by the money-lenders and the second owing to the corn famine. Shakespeare for dramatic purposes combines these two seditions into one, making the corn famine the chief cause of people's mutiny (Act I scene i). In Plutarch, again, the election to the consulship and the agitation against Coriolanus are spread over several days. There is the tumult, a meeting

of the senate next day, a meeting of the people, a temporary respite and an adjournment of three days before the final scene of the impeachment. All these preliminaries have been combined by Shakespeare into one scene (Act III scene i). By this method, Shakespeare achieves concentration of dramatic effects.

Examples of omissions : In Plutarch there are battles, invasions, and embassies which Shakespeare does not mention at all ; and there are in Plutarch passages which Shakespeare merely glances at by a mere allusion. Plutarch is copious in the details of the battles between the Romans and the Volscians, but Shakespeare omits many details for dramatic purposes. In Plutarch, the result of Cominius's embassy to Coriolanus is a respite of 30 days. In the play, (Act V scene i), there is no visible result of this embassy. The gap of 30 days in the play would have meant a certain weakening of the dramatic effect ; so, in the play, Menenius's embassy seems to follow close on that of Cominius.

Additions : There are scenes or portions of scenes in the play which have no parallel in Plutarch. Sometimes their object is to introduce the characters. Such are Act I scenes ii & iii ; the former introducing Aufidius to us, and the latter introducing Volumnia, Virgilia and Valeria. Then, again, the characters, especially those of Menenius and Aufidius are more developed in Shakespeare's play than in Plutarch. Act I scene x in which Aufidius is shown as forming a stern resolution to kill Marcius by fair means or foul, has no parallel in Plutarch. Similarly, in Act II scene i Coriolanus is shown as objecting to put on the gown of humility. According to Plutarch, Coriolanus did not raise any such objection. Shakespeare makes Coriolanus do so in order to emphasise the pride of the man and thus to add a greater definiteness to our conception of his character. Furthermore, Shakespeare adds several touches of tragic irony which are absent from Plutarch but which serve to knit the construction of the play closer.

Verbal borrowings : In many passages of *Coriolanus*, we have the very language of North's translation of Plutarch. This is conspicuously the case in Act V scene iii, lines 94 to 149, where Volumnia is pleading to her son to spare Rome.

Volumnia's speech here is almcst an actual transcription of the language of North.

(B) Questions on Characters

Q. 6. Write a brief character-sketch of Caius Marcius Coriolanus, indicating clearly his faults and virtues.

Ans. The subject of *Coriolanus*, says Dowden, "is the ruin of a noble life through the sin of pride." Pride, indeed, is the most glaring fault of Coriolanus, but not merely pride ; we might say pride mingled with selfishness and egoism. Born of a haughty race, Coriolanus has inherited from his mother an inflexible spirit. From his earliest years, he has been brought up in the belief that military glory is the noblest aim of life, and that arrogance towards his inferiors is a birthright, almost a virtue. Splendid and early military victories have hardened the inborn pride and selfishness of his nature ; while no opposition to the supremacy of the patricians has yet come to teach him the value of prudence and moderation. Thus when he first appears before us, the attitude of his mind is one of fierce astonishment that the commoners should dare to complain even when they are facing starvation. Instead of thinking of some relief measures, he would like to.use his sword to butcher them. He would rather see the city unroofed, before agreeing to any concession being granted to the people. It is a deep humiliation to him that he should have to seek a favour from them. It seems monstrous to him that they should demand any rights. In war he thinks them scarcely better than beasts of burden ; in peace, they are mere machines for the convenience of the nobles. His arrogance is towering ; his selfishness is over-weening ; and his hatred is vindictive.

With his pride, his contempt for the people, and his egoism, Coriolanus combines the fault of a complete lack of self-control. The least provocation is enough to infuriate him. He could have saved his consulship, if it were not for his lack of self-control. The use of the word "traitor" for him by the tribunes is enough, as the tribunes had anticipated, to enrage him. Similarly, he could have maintained his position with the Volscians if he had not become rash and had not been provoked into angry utterance when Aufidius insulted him. On both these crucia l occasions, Coriolanus brings about his own ruin by his

invective[1] and vituperation[2], for which he has a rich vocabulary.

Nor can we forgive Coriolanus for his joining the Volscians and leading a campaign against his own country. His conduct in this matter amounts to treason. No matter what the country did to him, there is not the least justification for Coriolanus's alliance with the Volscians for the .destruction of Rome. His mother's speech, in which she points out to him the wickedness and baseness of his intended revenge upon his country, is a true statement of the case against Coriolanus. This must remain a stigma on his name. If he desists[3] from destroying Rome, it is not because any patriotic feeling has been stirred in him ; it is because he must yield to the rough edge of his mother's tongue as he has done in the past.

Yet with all his faults, Coriolanus possesses conspicuous virtues. His services to his country have been many and great. His heroism and daring are unequalled. His valour and deeds of bravery are well described by Cominius in the senate-hall. Referring to Coriolanus' fighting inside Corioli, Cominius says, "...... alone he entered the mortal gate of the city, which he painted with shunless destiny ; aidless came off, and with a sudden reinforcement struck Corioli like a planet : now all's his." Apart from his valour, Coriolanus shows complete freedom from avarice. He declines Cominius's offer of one-tenth of the entire spoils of war because he does not want a bribe to pay for his sword. It is is generosity of nature which makes him refuse this offer. There s in him a certain tenderness, too. He remembers the old man of orioli in whose house he had found shelter. He feels a warmth f love for his wife and child ; and he shows a rare reverence to is mother. Nor must we forget his modesty which shrinks om all public eulogy. If he rejects the spoils of war, he rejects so all public applause and actually leaves the senate-hall when s brave deeds are about to be described. It is because of these rtues and qualities that Coriolanus attains the status of a hero d wins our sympathies in his downfall.

Q. 7. Bring out the qualities of *Coriolanus*, which n him our sympathies.

1, 2. abuse ; use of abusive words.

3. refrains ; abstains.

Ans. The pride, arrogance and egoism of Coriolanus constitute the tragic flaw in him and provide the basis for the tragedy of a man who possesses several qualities which win him our admiration and sympathy. First among these qualities is, of course, his valour and his services to his country. Coriolanus has an impressive record of military glory. The battle scenes in Act I of the play serve to reinforce that record. Volumnia proudly speaks of the twentyfive wounds which Marcius had on his body before he undertook the campaign against the Volscians. He suffers two more wounds in the new campaign making a total of twentyseven. Cominius gives to the Roman senate a most striking and almost awful account of the brave deeds of Coriolanus. Aufidius fully recognises the valour of Marcius, and thinks him bolder even than the devil. Aufidius confesses that his own valour is eclipsed by that of Coriolanus. Both friend and foe pay tributes to the bravery, fearlessness, and war-like qualities of Marcius. He feels a real delight in fighting. He emerges from Corioli, dripping with blood but eager for more blows. Meeting Cominius on the battlefield, he compares his delight in fighting to the pleasure he felt on his wedding day. The people are aware, too, of this man's services to his country and freely admit that he has deserved worthily of his country. He has planted his honours in the eyes of the people and his actions in the hearts of the people. Whatever patriotism he had, is completely nullified by his going over to the Volscians ; but his valour remains. To his country he proves a traitor, but his valour is never eclipsed. This valour is certainly the foremost quality which excites admiration for him, and which wins him our sympathy in his downfall.

Besides valour, Coriolnaus gives evidence of certain other qualities like humanity, modesty and generosity of nature, which endear him to us. His human side is seen in his reverential love for his mother, his paternal love for his son, and his tenderness towards his wife. On two crucial occasions, he yields to the pressure of his mother, on the second occasion risking his very life. "This magnificent and arrogant warrior, who bends his head neither to God nor to man, bows before his mother." He greets his wife with affectionate words, "My gracious silence hail ; O my sweet lady, pardon." His human side is also seen in his concern for the old man in whose house he had taken shelter

Corioli and who is now a captive in Roman hands. Besides, Coriolanus possesses a real modesty which shrinks from all public eulogy. Indeed, "when publicly congratulated, he becomes as shy as a school-girl". When Cominius begins his account of the valour of Marcius to the senators, Coriolanus leaves the senate-hall, not wishing to hear his own praise. He displays his generosity of nature when he refuses to enrich himself with the spoils of war which are offered to him.

At the time of his banishment, we see his human qualities in the way he bids farewell to his relatives and friends. Here we see his most amiable side, the most engaging qualities of the hero, the aristocrat who, within the close circle of his family and friends, is considerate, courteous, and affectionate ; and who faces misfortune with a brave heart. Even his pride is here mingled with a noble fortitude in which all illwill is for the moment stilled.

Q. 8. *Coriolanus* has been called a tragedy of the sin of pride. Explain, amplify and illustrate this remark, clearly indicating the nature of the pride of Caius Marcius.

Ans. It is quite true that *Coriolanus* is a tragedy of the sin of pride. In every tragedy of Shakespeare, the hero suffers from a fault of character which brings about his ruin and which causes the catastrophe in the play. For instance, in ***Macbeth***, the tragic flaw in the character of the hero is ambition ; in the case of ***Hamlet***, the tragic flaw is indecision ; in the case of *Othello*, the tragic flaw is jealousy ; and so on. In the case of *Coriolanus*, the tragic flaw is pride, or pride mingled with egoism. If Caius Marcius could have restrained his pride, he would have been a successful man ; but he mars his fortunes by his towering pride and arrogance.

In the very opening lines of the play, we are made aware of Caius Marcius's pride, and his contempt for the common people which results from that pride. The people consider him their chief enemy, and say that he is "a very dog to the commonalty". Even his great deeds in the service of his country are attributed to his desire to feed his pride. One of the citizens says that Caius Marcius is proud "even to the altitude of his virtue", that is his pride is as great as his valour. When Marcius appears on the scene, he gives an exhibition of his pride by

sternly rebuking the people and describing them as cowardly, inconstant and ignorant. He grimly says that, if the nobles were to allow him to use his sword, he would butcher the crowd of the citizens and make a huge pile of their dead bodies. Indeed, he seems to go out of the way, "to affect the malice and displeasure of the people". He seeks the consulship, but his pride will not allow him to perform the ordinary formalities of convassing. When at last he does perform those formalities, he mocks the people when he begs their votes ; he flouts them downright ; and treats them scornfully. Even Volumnia calls him "too absolute". It has been well said that Caius Marcius is pride incarnate, and that any weakening of his pride would in his opinion be disloyalty to an ideal.

When, at the instigation of the tribunes, the people withdraw their votes, Marcius draws his sword and gets ready to fight them. He speaks in an insulting manner to the tribunes. A word of protest from the people or the tribunes makes him lose his self-control. With a little tact and self-restraint, he could have won over the people to his side and could have rendered the tribunes powerless. But at the very use of the word "traitor" for him, he is stung to madness and screams out at the tribunes in great fury. It is his pride which brings down upon him the punishment of exile. Though defeated by the tribunes, he is not subdued and his tongue is as rasping as ever. "I banish you !" he cries to the Roman citizens when he is banished by them.

If Marcius's banishment results directly from the fault of pride in him, his death too may be attributed to the same fault. His banishment marks the first step in his tragedy, while his death completes the tragedy. If he had exercised self-restraint in the scene in which Aufidius brings certain charges against him, he could probably have saved the situation. The Volscian lords were quite well-disposed towards Marcius. If Marcius had coolly replied to the charges and if he had patiently explained his conduct in pardoning Rome, he might have continued to enjoy the confidence of the Volscians and might thus have frustrated Aufidius's conspiracy against him. But the insulting words of Aufidius are unbearable for Marcius. The insulting words of Aufidius enrage Marcius beyond measure, and his arrogance finds a free outlet in the way in which he lashes out at Aufidius and speaks

boastfully of the havcc he wrought in Corioli. In his violent fit of anger, he brushes aside all reason and he himself supplies a cue to his enemies for murdering him. Aufidius asks the lords if they can tolerate the insult which Marcius has offered to the Volscians. The pecple are reminded of the relatives whom they had lcst in the battle against Marcius. Even at this stage, one of the lords tries to scothe the crowd but the pride of Marcius is uncontrollable. Marcius hurls a fresh challenge at Aufidius, whereupon the conspirators attack him with their swords and kill him.

It is to be noted that the pride of Marcius Coriolanus is two-fold in its nature. It is based firstly upon a passionate self-esteem which is essentially egoistical. Secondly, his pride is the result of a passionate class-prejudice ; it is the pride of noble ancestory. Born of a ncble and haughty race, he has inherited from his mother an inflexible spirit. He has been brought up in the belief that arrcgance to his inferiors is a birth-right, and almost a virtue. Towards the patricians, he is always courteous, while towards the commoners he is invariably rude and arrogant.

Q. 9. Write a brief character-sketch of Volumnia.

Ans. Volumnia is surely the greatest of all the matrons in the plays of Shakespeare. A Roman matron of the old aristocracy, she is the personification of patrician and family pride. She has brought up her son in the patrician tradition and has taught him to regard heroic exploits as the chief goal of his life. Other mothers might cherish an only son with a tender care and anxiety ; but Volumnia's maternal love has moulded her son for the hardships and dangers of warfare. We are amazed by Volumnia's fierce nature and her delight in war. She visualises her son fighting in the Volscian war, wiping his bloody brow, and beating Aufidius's head below his knee. The greatest aspiration cf this mother is that her son should win laurels in war. The wounds a warrior suffers do add to his glory, according to her. She talks with pride of the twenty-five wounds which Marcius had on his body before going to the Volscian war, and with more pride still of the two new wounds he has received in the Volscian campaign. Wounds, blood, death—these have no terror for Volumnia. But Volmnia is not satisfied with the military achievements of her son. She

would like to see him elected to the consulship. In order to see him elected to that seat of authority, she urges him to suspend his patrician pride for the time being and to adapt himself to the requirements of the situation. She believes in policy and strategy ; pride in her opinion should give way to these. Thus, she urges him to hypocrisy for the attainment of his objective, and she scolds him into compliance with her wishes.

She is gentle and affectionate with her son as long as he acts in according with her wishes. But she bullies him and domineers over him when he proves obstinate. There is a difference between the pride of Coriolanus and the pride of Volumnia. Her pride is centred in him ; while his pride is centred in himself. When Marcius is banished, Volumnia's anger and sorrow know no bounds and she cries for the red pestilence to strike all trades in Rome, and she wishes all occupations to perish. On meeting the tribunes, after her son's banishment, her anger is let loose without restraint. She utters curses on the tribunes and on Rome, and wishes that gods had nothing else to do but to confirm her curses. When Menenius invites her to supper, she replies that anger is her meat. She disapproves of Virgilia's faint grumbling and would like Virgilia to lament in anger, Juno-like. She is not the one to indulge in weak lamentations. Even at this time of despair, her spirit is not broken down. She retains her pride and haughtiness, and she shows her essential masculinity.

But though, in her wildness of anger and grief, she has cursed Rome and the people of Rome, her patriotism is genuine and deep. Her patriotic instinct is greater even than her maternal instinct. Wnen Coriolanus threatens to destroy Rome, she pleads with him for mercy. She becomes pathetic and personal in her utterance ; she kneels before him thereby trying to shame him ; she argues with him. When Coriolanus continues to be indifferent, she uses her last weapon. If Coriolanus will yield neither to reason, pity, nor sentiment, he may yet be subdued by anger. She rises in all her dignity and fury, and she lashes out at him. She enforces his obedience by a show of anger and offended impatience. On a previous occasion she had subdued her son in an effort to save his consulship. On this occasion, she subdues him for a nobler and

higher purpose—namely, to save Rome. By her impassioned and truly patriotic speeches on this occasion, she makes up for any fault and defence she might have betrayed in her before. Even when Coriolanus tells her that his obedience to her wishes will mean his ruin and death, she does not modify her stand. Better that her son should go to ruin than that he should destroy the country of his birth. Volumnia here shows a supreme self-sacrifice and rises to sublime heights of glory.

Q. 10. Write a brief character-sketch of Virgilia and contrast her with Volumnia.

Ans. If Volumnia is essentially masculine and Juno-like in her strength, Virgilia is the purely feminine type and rather weak. Virgilia lives in the same house with her mother-in-law, and is tyrannised over by the latter who has a much stronger mind. When, for instance, Lady Valeria is announced, Virgilia asks her mother-in-law's permission to retire to her own chamber. The permission is not granted, and Virgilia has to stay on against her wish. Where Volumnia expresses a sense of glory in her son's danger, Virgilia feels anxiety and and alarm about the danger to which her husband is exposed. Even the thought of her husband's getting wounded in the battle fills her with horror. "His bloody brow! O Jupiter, no blood," says Virgilia. But Volumnia dismisses Virgilia's fear and says that wounds are a kind of ornament for a warrior. Virgilia feels none of Volumnia's delight in butchery. Volumnia exultantly describes how she sent her son to a cruel war. Virgilia timidly asks what would have happened if he had died in the fighting. Volumnia replies that even if she had a dozen sons, she would have wished eleven of them to die bravely in fighting rather than have one live an ignoble life of peace Thus Volumnia thinks first of her son's glory, while Virgilia. thinks first of her husband's peril. Marcius's absence from home, even though he has gone on a patriotic mission, fills Virgilia with melancholy and makes her sad. Volumnia feels mirthful during Marcius's absence, while Virgilia is determined not even to leave her house either to make a social call or to join the company of other ladies. Then, again, Virgilia is modest when talking of her son, while Volumnia is disposed to wax eloquent when talking about the deeds of hers. Lady Valeria describes Virgilia's son as a "noble child," but Virgilia merely replies,

"A crack, madam." Volumnia has no such reserve. She freely talks about the exploits and the glory of her son. Virgilia is, too, of a retiring disposition and is reticent by nature. Volumnia, on the contrary, talks a good deal and has, indeed, a copious tongue. Volumnia can become angry and haughty when occasion demands ; Virgilia is always gentle and mild.

Virgilia, essentially feminine as she is, shows her weakness by her tendency to shed tears. When Marcius returns from the Volscian campaign, tears flow from Virgilia's eyes, a reaction quite different from that of Volumnia. Yet there is a certain firmness in Virgilia too. For instance, though pressed hard by Lady Valeria and also by Volumnia, she yet refuses to leave her house during the absence of her husband. This firmness in her might have developed into strength if she had not been subject to the domineering presence of Volumnia in the household. She shows this firmness also in compelling Sicinius to listen to Volumnia's taunts. Something of this firmness is seen in the support she gives to Volumnia when Volumnia pleads with her son for mercy to Rome. Virgilia's love and devotion to her husband give way to her own and her mother-in-law's patriotic fervour. Still, Virgilia's general disposition is best described in the phrase" my gracious silence" with which Coriolanus greets her. She is gracious and she is silent by nature. She hardly speaks fifty lines in the play and yet her gracious nature is fully revealed to us. Coriolanus is deeply in love with her, and shows her all the esteem she deserves. The sight of Virgilia touches the tender feelings in Coriolanus's war-like nature. His heart always melts with love and softness to see her. Indeed, she gives to the play almost its only touch of tenderness. Although she speaks very little and although her role is unimportant, yet the drama would lose something if she were not there. Throughout the play she presents a contrast to her mother-in-law, and thus serves as a foil to the latter.

Q. 11. Write a brief character-sketch of Lady Valeria.

Ans. Lady Valeria is described by Coriolanus as the noble sister of Publicola, as the moon of Rome, and as chaste like the purest snow. This is a high tribute to Lady Valeria. In other words, Valeria be ongs to the patrician class, is the sister of a

noble patrician, and is a beautiful, graceful and chaste lady. These qualities of Valeria are made known to us quite late in the play when Coriolanus threatens to destroy Rome and when some of the ladies of Rome, led by Volumnia, attend upon Coriolanus to seek mercy for Rome. We, however, meet Valeria much earlier in the play, in Act I scene iii, when she calls on Volumnia and Virgilia. Valeria strikes us as a genial, warm-hearted, humorous and wholly lovable person. As soon as she enters Volumnia's house, she inquires after the health of Volumnia and Virgilia, asks Virgilia what she is sewing, calls the two ladies "manifest housekeepers", compliments Virgilia on her stitchery and inquires about Virgilia's little son. The very first speech of Valeria in this scene thus reveals to us her amiable nature, her sociable disposition, and charming manners. She then goes on to describe young Marcius's adventures with a butterfly, expressing her admiration for the manner in which the young boy tore the butterfly into pieces and calls him a noble child. Valeria does not feel short of words, and she talks with gusto. She urges Virgilia to go out of doors with her and to play the idle house-wife with her. When Virgilia refuses to go out of doors, Valeria humorously compares Virgilia to Penelope, the faithful and devoted wife of Ulysses. "Come ; I would your cambric were sensible as your finger, that you might leave pricking it for pity. Come, you shall go with us", says Valeria in an effort to wean away Virgilia from her stitchery. When Virgilia persists in her refusal, Valeria tries to tempt Virgilia with the promise that she will tell her some excellent news of her husband, and actually gives her some good news. Even after Valeria has bidden goodbye to Virgilia, she makes one more effort to take Virgilia with her on a social call : "Prithee, Virgilia, turn thy solemness out of door; and go along with us". Virgilia still refuses whereupon Valeria says, "Well, then, farewell". There is not the least sign of irritation or impatience from Valeria at the persistent refusal of Virgilia. Lady Valeria is certainly a social asset. Her conversational ability, her engaging manners, her generous nature, her pleasant wit and humour, not to speak of her aristocratic birth and breeding, attract us greatly to-wards her.

Q. 12. Write a brief character-sketch of Menenius.

Ans. Menenius is a patrician of the same class as

Coriolanus ; but, unlike Coriolanus, Menenius enjoys a certain popularity with the people on account of his good nature and wide sympathy. Unlike Coriolanus, again, this patrician has the patience and the tolerance to argue with the people and with the tribunes, and he speaks to them in a kindly manner, scolding them without bitterness and in gentle terms. He tries to pacify the mutinous crowd by telling them the tale of the belly. He speaks to them in a genial, conversational style, trying to make his narrative interesting as well as instructive for his audience. Menenius is not irritated by the impatience of the First Citizen, but with his tolerance and indulgence he defends the patricians and the senators without insulting the commoners.

Menenius's popularity with the people should not blind us to the fact that he is really undemocratic. He has no understanding of the people's grievances and no real respect for their rights and opinions. In his conversation with the crowd, he maintains an attitude of familiarity but he does not forget for a moment that the class to which he belongs is far above the commoners. He goes so far as to say that all good derives from the nobility and that no good can come from the commoners themselves. He is essentially an aristocrat with a contempt for the people but this contempt finds expression only when he is too irritated or provoked, not at all odd times as in the case of Caius Marcius.

Menenius describes himself as a pleasure-loving, blunt, hot-tempered patrician without grudge or malice against anyone. Upon the tribunes, he pours scorn and ridicule. He judges the tribunes not in an impartial manner, but exclusively by their attitude towards Marcius. Just because the tribunes accuse Marcius of pride, Menenius is up in arms and speaks to them with a mingled contempt and mockery, showing thus his gift for irony and sarcasm. He even becomes somewhat abusive towards the tribunes. Later in the play, he takes the tribunes to task for having brought down upon Rome the threat of destruction.

Menenius has a deep and sincere affection and regard for Caius Marcius. Indeed, he is an ardent admirer of Marcius and is almost blind to Marcius's faults. He goes into raptures on hearing that Marcius is returning home from the Volscian war, wounded and crowned with glory. He defends Marcius to the

citizens when the tribunes bring all kinds of charges against him. He makes a desperate bid to save Marcius from the sentence pronounced by the tribunes. He is, indeed, as he himself says, a book of Coriolanus's good acts. But his view of Coriolanus, as has been indicated above, is always one-sided. He wrongly thinks that Coriolanus rejected Cominius's petition because Coriolanus had not dined. He decides to go to Coriolanus at a time when Coriolanus has taken his dinner. He fails to understand Coriolanus's real nature and the real reason for his rejecting the appeal of Cominius. He feels broken-hearted when Coriolanus rejects his petition also. After his unsuccessful interview with Coriolanus, Menenius feels quite bitter about it. But, even in this frame of mind, Menenius is far from accusing Coriolanus of treason to the country. It is exactly here that Volumnia rises to a greater height than Menenius. Volumnia does not mince matters and is quite plain-spoken with her son. Menenius's unthinking worship of Coriolanus, his lack of judgment in respect of Coriolanus, and his blind admiration for Coriolanus do him little credit.

Yet Menenius has been made in some way lovable. He combines worldly wisdom with wit. He is a delightful old man, shrewd, honest, humorous, and with a penetrating eye for human weaknesses, both his own and others' (except of course Coriolanus's). His patriotism is truer than that of Coriolanus, and he is much less egoistical.

Q. 13. Write a brief character-sketch of Cominius.

Ans. Cominius is the man who leads the Roman forces to fight against the Volscians. The fact that Caius Marcius agrees to serve under Cominius is proof of the fact that Cominius has a notable record of military glory. Of course, Caius Marcius is a much greater warrior and soldier than Cominius, as is evident from the battle scenes in Act I. But Cominius is a much better kind of leader and a much better man. His qualities of leadership emerge clearly in his treatment of his soldiers. When his soldiers have been beaten back, he does not lose his temper, but on the contrary utters words of cheer and encouragement: "Breathe you my friends : well fought ; we have come off like Romans." Marcius in a similar situation utters curses on his soldiers : "All the contagions of the south light on you, you shames of Rome!" Cominius is never rash or reckless or hasty in

any of his actions. He has a balanced mind and his is always the voice of sanity. In the scene of the impeachment of Marcius by the tribunes, Cominius stands by Coriolanus, but nowhere gets excited and nowhere loses his temper. When Sicinius moves forward to arrest Marcius, Cominius says, "Aged sir, hands off." When Sicinius addresses the people to instigate them against Marcius, Cominius says, "That is the way to lay the city flat, to bring the roof to the foundation." When there is a clash between Marcius and the citizens, Cominius confidently says to the patricians, "Stand fast ; we have as many friends as enemies." Cominius, like Menenius, urges Marcius to speak fair to the people. He speaks words of good counsel to Marcius. "Arm yourself to answer mildly." He always speaks to Marcius gently, never rebuking or scolding him, but always supporting him. When Marcius accuses the tribunes of having instigated the people against him, Cominius agrees with Marcius, and says to the tribunes : "You are like to do such business". Cominius goes on to say that the people have been deceived by the tribunes and that Coriolanus does not deserve the dishonour which is being shown to him : "The people are abused ; set on. This paltering becomes not Rome ; nor has Coriolanus deserved this dishonour'd rub."

Cominius is an ardent admirer of Marcius. There is not the least touch of jealousy in his nature. He experiences no sense of rivalry in his relations with Marcius, even when he finds that Marcius is surpassing him in military glory and in political importance. He is full of praise and eulogy for Marcius. He claims to be able to differentiate Marcius's voice from that of every meaner man as a shepherd can differentiate the sound of thunder from the sound of a drum. He addresses Marcius as "flower of warriors". He does not refuse Marcius's wish to lead a force against the Volscians even though he finds Marcius's victory and pays him a rich tribute both in the battlefield and the senate-hall. He offers to Marcius one tenth of the captured treasure as a reward, but Marcius declines the offer. He gives his own noble steed as a reward to Marcius and confers the title of Coriolanus upon him. When Coriolanus asks for the release of a Volscian prisoner, Cominius says, "Were he the butcher of my son, he should be free as is the wind." In the senate-hall, he gives an elaborate description in about forty lines of the

heroic exploits of Marcius. In all these cases, Cominius gives evidence of a capacity for appreciation and a generosity which are rare. We can go so far as to say that Cominius is the one character in the play in whom we discover no serious fault.

Q. 14. Write a character-sketch of Tullus Aufidius.

Ans. The first quality of Aufidius that is made known to us is his valour. Marcius has great admiration for the valour of Aufidius. Referring to the prospect of fighting against him, Marcius says, "He is a lion that I am proud to hunt." Marcius also admires Aufidius for the latter's nobility and says, "I sin in envying his nobility."

When we first meet Aufidius in the play, we find him chiding the senators of Corioli for their failure to keep their plans a secret. He tells that their negligence in keeping their plans a secret will prove a great handicap to him in pursuing his enterprise against Rome. Thus, with his nobility and valour, Aufidius combines a certain shrewdness.

Aufidius is to the Volscians what Coriolanus is to Rome in so far as the war beetween Volscians and Romans is concerned. Each is looked upon by his countrymen and by the senators of his country as their hero, as their bravest warrior, and as their saviour. When Aufidius meets Marcius on the battle-field, there is an exchange of words of defiance and hatred. In the battle of words, Aufidius is quite a match for Marcius, but in the actual fighting Aufidius proves the worse fighter. Talking to one of his soldiers, Aufidius confesses Marcius's superiority to him as a warrior. On all the occasions that they have fought, Aufidius has been defeated. Aufidius is convinced that he cannot vanquish Marcius in fair fight. But his envy and hatred for Marcius are so intense that he resolves to k ll him by whatever means possible. In his desperation, he decides to kill his foe at any cost, by dishonourable means, if necessary. The speech in which he forms this resolution throbs with a violence of emot on, and gives an effective expression to his wrath, fierceness and jealousy.

However, when Marcius comes to Aufidius for refuge, Aufidius seems to forget his jealousy and his wrath, and welcomes his sworn enemy with open arms. Aufidius becomes as eloquent in his words of welcome as he previously was in his expression of hatred. It

seems that his patriotism and his joy at Marcius's offer to join him in destroying Rome have completely overwhelmed his antagonism to Marcius. He offers one half of his commission to Marcius and even allows Marcius to conduct and to lead the campaign against Rome. This is a transformation, indeed, in Aufidius.

But another transformation is yet to take place before the play ends. Aufidius discovers, as the campaign against Rome makes progress, that his own soldiers have become more devoted to Marcius than they were to him. He finds also that Marcius who had offered himself as a faithful ally is becoming stiff and proud. Jealousy once again raises its ugly head in the breast of Aufidius. Once again, he begins to hate the man who seems to be superseding him. From now on, Aufidius is on the look-out for a suitable opportunity to crush the rival who is ignorant of the designs of Aufidius. No code of ethics or morality can condone the subsequent conduct of Aufidius. He is guilty of hypocrisy when he seems to approve of Marcius's decision to surrender to his mother's wishes. He is guilty of craft and cunning when he hatches a plot to assassinate Marcius. Only by bringing about the death of Marcius can Aufidius re-establish his own supreme position. He accuses Marcius of being a traitor, calls him a "boy of tears" and has him murdered. Aufidius's sense of triumph is, however, short-lived, because soon he is filled with regret and remorse. He offers to lend a hand in carrying the dead body of Marcius and promises a noble memorial to Marcius, thus making amends to some extent for his conspiracy and his act of murder.

Q. 15. Write a character-sketch of the two tribunes and indicate their role in the play.

Ans. The most striking trait of the two tribunes—Brutus and Scinius—from the dramatic point of view is their jealousy and hatred of Caius Marcius. The pride and arrogance of Marcius are intolerable to them. They are the representatives, the spokesmen and the custodians of the interests of the commoners and, in that capacity, they think it their duty to protect the people against the growing power of Marcius. Early in the play, we perceive the malice and grudge which the tribunes feel towards Marcius. They say that, in going to the Volscian war, Marcius is prompted more by a desire to earn fame than by a desire to serve his country, and that in order

to win fame he has even accepted a subordinate position under Cominius.

Menenius has a very low opinion of the tribunes. He describes them as "a brace of unmeriting, proud, violent, testy, magistrates, alias fools." According to him, the tribunes crave for public applause, have no judicial ability, are unable to decide a dispute, and are "a pair of strange ones". This, if true, is a very ugly picture of the tribunes and their magisterial functions, and considerably lowers them in our opinion. However, the tribunes are not slow-witted or lacking in the power to make a retort. For instance, Brutus calls Menenius a "perfecter giber for the table than a necessary bencher in the Capitol." Brutus shows also a talent for vivid description. His description of the tumultuous reception given to Coriolanus on the latter's return to Rome from the Volscian war is masterly in its vividness. The tribunes provide ample evidence of being a pair of crafty, subtle, deliberate, cool-headed intriguers. Their main role in the play is to bring about the downfall of Coriolanus in Rome. They know the hot temper of Coriolanus and are able to provoke him to rash and reckless utterance when it suits them to do so. They cleverly and effectively instigate the people against Coriolanus and succeed even in prevailing upon them to revoke the votes with which they have already elected him to the consul. In achieving this purpose, they employ unscrupulous methods ; they are guilty of exaggeration and falsehood ; they dupe the people ; and they slander Coriolanus. Nor do the ignoble efforts of the tribunes end here. They go on to secure from the people the verdict of banishment against Coriolanus by accusing him of tyranny and of hostility to the people. The tribunes prove themselves consummate villains. They are revengeful and they are ignoble in their revenge. They are crafty and they damn Marcius with Marcius's own open-ness and his pride. They are practical in their approach to the problem before them. They are men of action and are able to translate their evil designs into reality. And both of them are very effective and eloquent speakers who sway the crowd with their plausible arguments and their rhetoric.

But the tribunes have some redeeming features too. They do not love Marcius, but they do love Rome and the Roman

people. The people too have a genuine affection and regard for them. Besides, the tribunes show a certain dignity when news of a new danger from the Volscians headed by Marcius is received. On this occasion, they try to cheer the people and to put courage into them. Again, the tribunes feel a real anxiety when they learn about Marcius's threat to destroy Rome. That the tribunes are essentially patriotic and also democratic, cannot be doubted. Shakespeare has not made them utterly base. They are skilful politicians and unattractive figures. But on the practical side they were right where Marcius was wrong. Besides, in the moment of their triumph, they show no vulgar exultation, and maintain a rather fine dignity under a storm of abuse.

Q. 16. Write a note on the Roman people or citizens, or the Roman mob as depicted by Shakespeare in *Coriolanus*. Do you think that, in thus depicting the Roman people Shakespeare shows his anti-democratic views ?

Ans. When we meet the Roman people first in the play, we find them burning with a passionate hostility towards the patricians as a class and towards Caius Marcius in particular. They are carrying staves, clubs, and other weapons, and they are determined to revenge themselves on the patricians, and on Caius Marcius first of all. They seem to have a sufficient reason for their mutiny. They are facing a corn famine, and the patricians are indifferent to their plight. As for Caius Marcius, the feeling of the people is that he is a very dog to the commonalty, and is their foremost enemy.

But though the people have reasons for mutiny, we cannot help feeling a certain contempt for them after listening to Marcius's description of them. Marcius accuses them of being cowardly and mean, unreliable and untrustworthy, inconstant and fickle, lacking in proper judgment, fond of idle political gossip and political conjecture, unable to appreciate greatness and justice and stupid. Menenius believes that the people are lacking not only in discretion but also in courage. The charge of stupidity against them is proved when a crowd of people in another part of the city throw their caps in the air after their complaints have been answered and a petition for the appointment of tribunes has been granted to them. The charge of cowardice is proved when the crowd disperses under the

direction of Marcius to kill whom they had gathered. The fickle-mindedness or inconstancy of the people and their ack of intelligent thinking are clearly revealed to us at the time of the election of the consul of Rome. They think Marcius to be proud and contemptuous towards the people. Yet they feel that it would be ungrateful not to vote for him. Having voted for him they change their minds when the tribunes address them, and they decide to withdraw their votes. The people then allow themselves to be tutored by the Aediles (acting under the instructions of the tribunes), and shout their full support to the tribunes, when the sentence of banishment is pronounced upon Marcius. Here we see a complete surrender on the part of the peop e to the judgment of their tribunes. In spite of their deep hostility to Coriolanus, the people show their awareness and their recognition of Coriolanus's heroic deeds by electing him to the consulship ; but the people do not have sufficient judgment nor toleration to abide by their decision.

According to one critic, *Coriolanus* is a mine of insults against the people. Another critic says that Shakespeare used the poor as material for fun to amuse his richer patrons and had no sympathy for them. It is true that Shakespeare's leanings are not towards democracy, and that Shakespeare had no liking for the rough, uneducated mob. *Coriolanus* contains a plain, unvarnished picture of the mob's fickleness and brutality. But we must recognise that Shakespeare was also alive to the virtues and merits of the people at large. Want of sympathy with the poor in their suffering is not to be found anywhere in his plays. It would be wrong to think that in *Coriolanus* Shakespeare had painted the people in the darkest colours. Something, indeed, can be said for the people too. Their mutiny in the opening scene has solid grounds. They are not blind to the heroism and valour of Marcius. At the time of the election to the consulship, the Third Citizen urges his comrades not to show ingratitude towards Marcius. Nor are the citizens so stupid as not to see through Coriolanus's sarcastic manner when he is seeking their votes. They can perceive the mockery, irony and scorn in Coriolanus's manner of speaking to them. But they show a lot of toleration. Again, the people also give an evidence

of their sense of humour. The Third Citizen shows a turn for a humorous play on words, and he makes a couple of amusing jokes at the expense of the Second Citizen. In the case of Menenius's narrative of the belly, the First Citizen shows a certain mental alertness when he says to Menenius, "You must not think to fob off our disgrace with a tale." The First Citizen contributes picturesque touches of his own to Menenius's story and presses repeatedly for a conclusion from him. The citizens are not thus depicted as idiots or blockheads.

It has been suggested that Shakespeare has blackened the character of the people for three reasons. Firstly, he was quite convinced of the people's lack of intelligence, their fickle-mindedness, and their brutality. Secondly, he wanted to heighten the glory of Coriolanus by contrast. "Alone I did it", is no empty boast. Even the Roman soldiers have been shown as cowards in order to emphasize the valour of Coriolanus. Thirdly, Shakespeare wanted to supply Coriolanus with more matter for invective (=abusive speeches). Coriolanus could not show his talent for the use of abusive words if the people had not been shown as cowardly, ignorant, and inconstant.

Q. 17. Write a note on the contrast of male characters in *Coriolanus*.

Or

Contrast the character of Coriolanus with that of Menenius, of Cominius, and of Aufidius.

Ans. The character of Coriolanus stands in sharp contrast to the three other principal male characters. Like Coriolanus, Menenius also has a low opinion about the commoners and feels a certain contempt for them. But his behaviour towards the common people and the manner in which he speaks to them are widely different from Coriolanus's attitude towards them. Coriolanus is extremely proud, haughty and arrogant. He is always full of abuse for the common people. Far from trying to conceal his contempt for them, he does not miss any opportunity of openly expressing that contempt. Menenius has perfect control over his temper, while Coriolanus suffers from a complete lack of self-control. When Menenius meets the mutinous crowd, he addresses them as "my countrymen, masters, my good friends, mine honest neighbours". He almost speaks to them

on a footing of equality. Trying to convince them about the goodwill of the patricians towards them, he tells them the fable of the belly. Even when provoked, he does not use abusive words for them. The people, too, have a high regard for him. They think him to be one "that hath always loved the people", and "one honest enough". Coriolanus on the contrary bursts into a rage as soon as he meets the mutinous crowd. He addresses them as, "you dissentious rogues" and as "curs". He accuses them bluntly of ignorance, fickle-mindedness, and stupidity. His description of them may be true, but there is no need to be so blunt with them. Menenius tries to tackle the crowd in a tactful manner ; but for Coriolanus, the word "tact" has no meaning. We find the same difference between the attitudes of the two men towards the people's tribunes. Coriolanus is ever ready to abuse them openly, regardless of consequences. Menenius is self-restrained and self-controlled. Menenius hates the tribunes no less than Coriolanus, and indeed, uses some very harsh words for them in a conversation (in Act III, scene i) calling them "a brace of un-meriting, proud, violent, testy magistrates, alias fools", but he uses such language for them when he is alone with them, and not in public. In public Menenius tries to reason with the tribunes without showing any contempt for them. When the crowd has been instigated against Coriolanus, Coriolanus thus speaks to Sicinius, "Thou wretch, despite overwhelm thee." Menenius, on the other hand, says "Coriolanus, patience : speak, good Sicinius." Menenius does not lose his balance of mind throughout the tumult that occurs on this occasion and argues with the tribunes in such a sensible and self-controlled manner that Sicinius feels compelled to say, "Noble Menenius, be you then as the people's officer." Menenius fully shares Coriolanus's pride of class, but he is more successful in dealing with the people and the tribunes than Coriolanus would ever be. Menenius is a perfect foil to Coriolanus. His presence in the play emphasizes all the faults of Coriolanus, namely, his pride, his arrogance, his egoism and his selfishness. Menenius does not suffer from any of these faults. When Rome is threatened with destruction, he thinks mainly of Rome ; Coriolanus on the contrary thinks himself greater than Rome. It is unfortunate that Menenius does not show himself fully alive to the faults of Coriolanus, but commends him highly

all the time except in one scene where he describes to the tribunes how Coriolanus has changed from what he used to be in his attitude towards himself and Cominius.

Coriolanus has been contrasted with Cominius also. Nowhere in the play do we find Cominius in a mood of irritation, anger, or indignation. Cominius is shown as having certain qualities of leadership which are lacking in Coriolanus. When the soldiers of Coriolanus show signs of retreat, Coriolanus loses his temper with them and showers abuse upon them. Cominius in a similar situation speaks words of encouragement to his soldiers and tells them that they have done their best even though they have been driven back. No wonder that the soldiers of Coriolanus refuse to follow him into the city of Corioli, letting him take the risk of fighting single-handed. In the scene of the impeachment of Coriolanus by the tribunes, Cominius stands by Coriolanus but nowhere gets excited and nowhere loses his temper. His is always the voice of sanity. He is a perfectly balanced and rational character trying to put a curb on Coriolanus's temper and trying to promote Coriolanus's interest. He feels deeply disappointed when Coriolanus rejects his suit for mercy to Rome. Like Menenius, Cominius also is anxious to save Rome from destruction. Like Menenius, he too puts the country before self and thus he too serves as a foil to Coriolanus.

Aufidius offers another contrast to Coriolanus. In the first place, Aufidius serves to emphasise Coriolanus's valour. A great warrior himself, he is defeated by Coriolanus every time. Secondly, Aufidius does not show that high sense of honour and that open-heartedness which are among the striking qualities of Coriolanus. Aufidius's sense of honour is subordinated to his jealousy of Coriolanus. Jealousy takes such a hold of Aufidius that he decides to kill Coriolanus by cunning and by craft, if he cannot kill him in open battle. Subsequently, he acts in a hypocritical manner by seeming to endorse Coriolanus's surrender to his mother, Volumnia, and then goes on to hatch a plot for the assassination of Coriolanus. Aufidius thus proves to be hypocritical, secretive, crafty, and dishonourable, and in this way serves as a foil to Coriolanus who is strictly honest, frank, outspoken, and completely free from any kind of hypocrisy and cunning.

Q. 18. Write a note on the contrast of women characters in *Coriolanus*.

Ans. There are three women characters in *Coriolanus* : Volumnia, Virgilia and Valeria. Virgilia offers a sharp contrast to her mother-in-law Volumnia and serves as a foil to her. Volumnia, has a masculine nature, while Virgilia is purely feminine. Volumnia has a fierce mind which takes delight in war. Her greatest ambition is that her son should win laurels in war. The wounds which a warrior suffers do add to his glory, according to her. She talks with pride of the twentyfive wounds which Marcius had on his body before going to the Volscian war and with still more pride of the two new wounds he has received in the Volscian campaign. Wounds, blood, death—these have no terror for Volumnia. Virgilia feels none of Volumnia's delight in butchery. The thought of her husband's getting wounded in the battle fills her with horror : "His bloody brow : O Jupiter, no blood", she says. But Volumnia dismisses Virgilia's fear and says that wounds are a kind of ornament for a warrior. Volumnia expresses a sense of glory in her son's danger ; while Virgilia feels an anxiety and alarm about the danger to which her husband is exposed. Volumnia exultantly describes how she sent her son to a cruel war. Virgilia timidly asks what would have happened if he had died in the fighting. Volumnia replies that even if she had a dozen sons, she would have wished eleven of them to die bravely in fighting rather than have one live an ignoble life of peace. Thus Volumnia thinks first of her son's glory ; while Virgilia thinks first of her husband's peril. Volumnia can feel mirthful during Marcius's absence, while Virgilia is determined not even to leave her house either to make a social call or to join the company of other ladies. Then, again, Virgilia is modest while talking about her son, whereas Volumnia is disposed to wax eloquent when talking about the deeds of hers. Lady Valeria describes Virgilia's son as a noble child, but Virgilia merely replies, "A crack, madam". Volumnia has no such reserve. She freely talks about the exploits and the glory of her son. Virgilia is, too, of a retiring disposition and is reticent by nature. Volumnia, on the contrary, talks a good deal and has indeed, a copious tongue. Volumnia can become angry and haughty when occasion demands ; Virgilia is always gentle and mild. Virgilia

is gracious and silent by nature. She hardly speaks fifty lines in the play. By her gentleness and softness, she lends tenderness to the play. Volumnia, however, is emphatic and assertive in her manner of speech and often becomes rough. Virgilia is tyrannised over by Volumnia who has a much stronger mind. When, for instance, Lady Valeria is annouced, Virgilia asks her mother-in-law's permission to retire to her own chamber. The permission is not granted, and Virgilia has to stay on against her wish.

Lady Valeria resembles Volumnia rather than Virgilia. Valeria serves as a foil to both Volumnia and Virgilia. She has some of the qualities of Volumnia but in much less measure. For instance, Valeria shows her masculine touch in her description of the manner in which the young Marcius tore a butterfly into bits. Valeria seems to have relished young Marcius's cruel performance, and accordingly calls the young Marcius a "noble child". Volumnia fully approves of what the young Marcius did, saying that the boy must have been in one of his father's moods. Virgilia, it may be noted, has no comment to make in this connection. Again, Valeria like Volumnia, but unlike Virgilia, is a talkative woman. Valeria talks in a lighthearted manner, is humorous, and likes company. Several times does she suggest to Virgilia to let aside her stitchery and to go out of doors. She humorously calls Virgilia another Penelope. She even promises that she will tell Virgilia excellent news of her husband, and she does give her some good news. She urges Virgilia to "turn her solemnness out of door", and go with her. But Virgilia resists all Valeria's efforts. Valeria and Volumnia are quite cheerful and mirthful, while Virgilia is melancholy and sad. As Volumnia says to Valeria with reference to Virgilia, "Let her alone, lady ; as she is now, she will but disease our better mirth."

Q. 19. Write a note on the contrast of characters in *Coriolanus.*

Ans. We have interesting contrasts of characters in the play *Coriolanus.* In the first place, the character of Coriolanus has been sharply contrasted with those of Menenius, Cominius and Aufidius. While Coriolanus is extremely proud, haughty, arrogant and always full of abuse for the common people, Menenius speaks to the people gently and in a persuasive

manner. While Coriolanus is regarded by the people as their enemy, Menenius enjoys a certain popularity with them. The people think him to be a patrician who loves the people and who is honest. While Coriolanus suffers from a complete lack of self-control, Menenius has perfect control over his temper. Coriolanus bursts into a rage at the slightest provocation; Menenius, even when provoked, maintains an even temper and refrains from using abusive words for the people. Menenius does not lose his balance of mind throughout the tumult that occurs in Rome when the people have been instigated by the tribunes against Marcius. Menenius fully shares Coriolanus's class of pride but he is tactful, worldly-wise and self-restrained in dealing with the people and the tribunes. He has qualities which Coriolanus completely lacks. When Rome is threatened with destruction, Menenius thinks mainly of Rome; Coriolanus, on the contrary, thinks himself greater than Rome. Menenius is a perfect foil to Coriolanus, and his presence in the play emphasizes all the faults of Coriolanus, namely, his pride, his arrogance, his egoism, and his selfishness. Coriolanus has been contrasted with Cominius also. Nowhere in the play do we find Cominius in a mood of indignation, anger or even irritation. Cominius shows throughout a perfect control over his temper and a perfect self-restraint. Besides, Cominius has a certain quality of leadership which is lacking in Coriolanus. When, for instance, the soldiers of Coriolanus show signs of retreat, Coriolanus loses his temper with them, and showers abuse upon them. Cominius in a similar situation speaks words of encouragement to his soldiers and tells them that they have done their best even though they have been driven back. Unlike Coriolanus, again, Cominius puts his country above himself while Coriolanus thinks himself greater than his country.

Aufidius is another foil to Coriolanus. In the first place, Aufidius serves to emphasize Coriolanus's valour. A great warrior himself, he is defeated by Coriolanus every time. Secondly, Aufidius does not have that high sense of honour and that open-heartedness which are among the striking qualities of Coriolanus. Aufidius subordinates his honour to his jealousy of Coriolanus. Aufidius proves hypocritical, crafty, and dishonourable, while Coriolanus is strictly honest, outspoken and completely free from any kind of hypocrisy or cunning.

We also find a contrast of characters among the women in this play. Virgilia offers a sharp contrast to her mother-in-law, Volumnia, and serves as a foil to her. Volumnia has a masculine nature, and she takes a fierce delight in war and in blood-shed. Virgilia is purely feminine and, far from sharing Volumnia's delight in butchery, shrinks from the very thought of blood. Volumnia thinks first of her son's glory ; while Virgilia thinks first of her husband's peril. Volumnia, again, can feel mirthful during Marcius's absence, while Virgilia is determined not even to leave her house as long as her husband is away. Virgilia is modest while talking about her son ; while Volumnia is disposed to wax eloquent when talking about the deeds of her son. Virgilia has a retiring disposition and is reticent by nature. Volumnia, on the contrary, talks a good deal and has, indeed, a copious tongue. Volumnia can become angry and haughty when occasion demands ; Virgilia is always gentle and mild. Volumnia lends force and fierceness to the play ; Virgilia lends softness and tenderness to the play. Valeria resembles Volumnia rather than Virgilia. She serves as a foil to both Volumnia and Virgilia. She has some of the qualities of Volumnia, but in a much lesser degree. Valeria shows her masculine touch in her description of the way in which the young Macrius tore a butterfly into bits. Valeria seems to have relished young Marcius's cruel performance. Volumnia fully approves of what the young Marcius did, while Virgilia, it may be noted, has no comment to make in this connection. Again, Valeria, like Volumnia, but unlike Virgilia, is a talkative woman. Valeria's sense of humour and her light-heartedness, again, are contrasted with Virgilia's seriousness and melancholy. Both Valeria and Volumnia are shown as mirthful, while Virgilia is disposed to be sad.

(C) Miscellaneous Questions

Q. 20. Discuss the view that *Coriolanus* is a political play and that it contains an exposition of Shakespeare's political faith.

Ans. It has been said that *Coriolanus* is a political play which shows to us his anti-democratic views and opinions. There is much evidence in the play to lend weight to this opinion about the play. The war between the Romans and the Volscians, the meetings of the Romans and the Volscian senates, the election to the Roman consulship, the speeches of the Roman

tribunes to the people on the subject of their rights and privileges, Marcius's alliance with the Volscians against Rome, Aufidius's plot for the assassination of Marcius—these are all political events. The conflict between the Roman patricians and the commoners, the demand of the commoners to have their own tribunes, Marcius's confirmed opposition to grant any of the demands of the commoners—these are also political in character. The arguments for and against democracy and aristocracy, on the privileges of the few and claims of the many, on liberty and slavery, power and the abuse of it, peace and war, occupy most of the space in this play. Shakespeare has in this play shown himself well versed in history and state affairs. Hazlitt, an eminent critic, went so far as to say about this play, "Any one who studies it may save himself the trouble of reading Burke's *Reflections* or Paine's *Rights of Man*, or the *Debates* in both Houses of Parliament since the French Revolution." There is no doubt, therefore, that the play of *Coriolanus* has a predominantly political atmosphere. As for Shakespeare's anti-democratic views, there is, again, considerable evidence to support this opinion. The Roman people have been depicted as ignorant, fickle-minded or inconstant, lacking in judgment, stupid and brutal. A critic has said that this play is "a mine of insults to the people." Another critic has expressed the view that, in painting the poor people in dark colours, Shakespeare was trying to please his rich patrons and that Shakespeare himself shared to a certain extent Marcius's supreme contempt for the poor people. Even a superficial reading of the play is enough to show that the Roman people have been shown to us in a degrading light, and we are made to feel that such people do not deserve any political rights at their stage of mental development. A rich vocabulary of abuse has been employed by Shakespeare in this play in the description of the common people.

It must, however, be pointed out that Shakespeare did not write this play from political motives or to elaborate any political doctrine. Neither in this play nor anywhere else did Shakespeare preach a political theory. Shakespeare was more interested in human nature, in human character, and in human motives than in any political system. His method of writing plays was to select certain characters and certain incidents,

whether from history, fiction or his own imagination, and to show us dramatically how those characters would act midst those incidents. He never selected characters and incidents to illustrate a particular theory of ethic or of politics. In the case of *Coriolanus*, Shakespeare found striking incidents and strong characters and he felt that these incidents and characters would be a fit subject for dramatic handling. Marcius, Volumnia, and Aufidius are the very embodinment of strength. So are the tribunes, in spite of their meanness. The clash between Marcius and the tribunes, the war between the Volscians and the Romans, Marcius's invasion of Rome, Volumnia's passionate pleading on behalf of Rome, the conspiracy against and the assassination of Marcius—these are incidents which caught the imagination of Shakespeare and attracted his dramatic genius. The play has in fact nothing of a set political purpose. As Dowden says, the subject of *Coriolanus* is the ruin of a noble life through the sin of pride, or perhaps we might say, of pride and selfishness. Whatever of politics we have in the play is incidental to Shakespeare's design which is an analysis and exposition of human character. No clear picture of Shakespeare's political views emerges from this or any other play by him. It would he hasty to infer from this play that Shakespeare was either in favour of aristocracy or of democracy. If Shakespeare's portrayal of the mob here seems to show his anti-democratic views, the speeches of the tribunes who offer a passionate plea for the rights and privileges of the commoners would seem to show Shakespeare's leanings towards democracy. The fact is that Shakespeares gives us an impartial picture of the behaviour of the commoners as well as of the patricians. Shakespeare was interested in a study of the human character and it is in characters—not only Marcius, Aufidius and Volumnia, but also in Menenius, the tribunes, the people, Cominius, Virgilia, Valeria, and the serving-men—that we feel more interested. Most of the charatcters being political, the play certainly acquires a political atmosphere, but political events are the context in which these characters reveal themselves.

Q. 21. Bring out clearly the tragic conflict in ***Coriolanus*****.**

Ans. Conflict is of the essence of all drama. Every play shows some kind of conflict, some kind of tug-of-war, some tension. There are two varieties of conflict, outer and inner. The outer

conflict is a conflict is a conflict between a character and his circumstances, a character and other characters, or a character and his environment. The inner conflict occurs within a character ; it takes place in the mind of a character ; it shows a character torn between two aims. *Coriolanus* contains both these kinds of conflict.

The outer conflict in *Coriolanus* is two-fold : (a) the conflict between Marcius and the people of Rome, as also the conflict between Marcius and the tribunes who represent the people ; (b) the conflict between the Romans and the Volscians, and the conflict between their respective heroes , Marcius and Aufidius. Both these conflicts are seen in the very opening scene of the play. When the play opens, we see the Roman citizens in a mutinous mood ; they are agitating against the patricians but they are especially full of hatred for Marcius. They believe Marcius to be their chief enemy and a "very dog to the commonalty". They are determined to kill Marcius in spite of his war-like deeds which, they say, he accomplished partly to please his mother and partly to feed his pride. When Marcius appears, he rebukes the citizens, using harsh and almost abusive language. He calls them "dissentious rogues" and "curs ;" he accuses them of cowardice, ignorance, inconstancy or fickleness, and stupidity ; and he bids them disperse which they do. Marcius gives free expression to his contempt for the people and declares that, if he were permitted by the patricians to use his sword, he would butcher a large number of the commoners. This conflict between Marcius and the people develops as the play proceeds. Marcius's conflict with the tribunes is also indicated in the opening scene. The tribunes, talking to each other, recall the contemptuous manner of Marcius towards them and attribute to him motives which he does not really have. In the opening scene, again, we become acquainted with the conflict between the Romans and the Volscians, and the personal hostility between Marcius and Aufidius, when Marcius declares that Aufidius is a lion whom he would feel proud to hunt.

Both these conflicts develop as the play proceeds. There are the battle-scenes which show how the conflict between the Romans and the Volscians develops. After a few initial reverses, the Romans are victorious. Marcius wins a personal triumph

over Aufidius in a single combat. The conflict between Marcius and the people develops after Marcius's triumphant return to Rome. The tribunes instigate the people after Marcius has been elected to the consulship and the people get ready to revoke the election. There is a wordy battle between Marcius and the tribunes ; there is an actual skirmish between them ; and the climax is reached with Marcius's banishment and Marcius's abusive speech to the Roman people. The conflict revives when Marcius, after having made up with Aufidius threatens to destroy Rome and ends only when Marcius is subdued by his mother. Back in Corioli, Marcius discovers that Aufidius has again turned into his enemy and, after a brief exchange of heated words between them, Marcius is assassinated.

The inner conflict of the play is found in Marcius. Marcius's pride does not permit him to beg people's votes, but custom demands it, and the tribunes would not relax the custom. After much hesitation Marcius agrees to put on the gown of humility and to seek the votes of the people; but his mind continues to be restless throughout the election and he continues to be in two minds even when asking for votes. This mental restlessness and this double-mindeness are, indeed, the cause of the mocking, and the unsavoury remarks he makes while asking for votes. This inner conflict becomes more painful and even agonizing when, later, he is urged by the patricians and by his mother to speak gently to the people. It is for him an ordeal that he should confront the people to answer the charges against him. He cannot understand why his own mother wants him to soften toward the commoners and he resists her pressure as much as he can. His pride has, however, to yield to the external pressure and he agrees to face the people. But he only worsens matters. His pride is inflamed once again, and he suffers banishment as a result of his angry and abusive speeches about the people. His pride has had the better of discretion and even of his ambition to be the consul.

Nor does the inner confllict of Marcius end here. Marcius goes over to the Volscians and makes up with Aufidius in order to destroy Rome. This he does without any apparent conflict. His desire for revenge is so great that all claims of patriotism are set aside and all his old enmity of Aufidius is quenched. The conflict begins when he is ready to destroy Rome and when

appeals for mercy begin to come from his friends and relatives. The first to come is Cominius who is followed by Menenius. To both he turns a deaf ear, but we can imagine how pained he must be feeling to have to reject these worthy men. The conflict becomes more painful when he is face to face with his wife and his mother. He finds his resolution weakening, but he musters all his will-power to withstand the pressure of the ladies. This interview is a torture to him. On one hand is his wounded pride and his passionate desire to punish the Roman people who disgraced and dishonoured him. On the other hand is his tender love for wife and his profound respect for his mother. The agonizing conflict ends in his surrender to his mother, though the surrender subsequently costs him his life.

Q. 22. Bring out the comic elements in *Coriolanus*.

Ans. The tragic atmosphere of, and the bitterness in, the play *Coriolanus* is occasionally relieved by touches of humour, and by light-hearted talk here and there. There is, for instance, a certain element of comedy in the good-natured chafing between Menenius and the Roman citizens in the opening scene of the play. Menenius narrates to the crowd the fable of the belly with some gusto ; and he is interrupted again and again by the First Citizen who presses for a conclusion. There is an under-current, though faint, of humour in the manner in which the fable is narrated and in which the First Citizen seems to heckle Menenius.

We also have an element of comedy in the domestic scene, in the household of Marcius, when Valeria calls on Volumnia and Virgilia. The humour here lies in the remarks of Valeria. Valeria gives an amusing account of the way in which the young Marcius caught a butterfly, released it, caught it again, and tore it. Besides, Valeria would like Vigilia to go out of doors with her and to play "the idle house-wife" with her. When Virgilia refuses to go, Valeria calls her another Penelope, and expresses the wish that Virgilia's cambric were as sensitive as her fingers so that she might give up her stitchery out of pity. Finally, Valeria asks Virgilia "to turn her solemnness out of door." Valeria's talk is light-hearted and amusing.

The conversation between Menenius on one hand and the two tribunes on the other in the beginning of Act II may also

be regarded as a comic element in the play. Referring to Marcius, Brutus says that he is a lamb that baes like a bear ; while Menenius calls Marcius a bear that lives like a lamb. Menenius goes on to describe the tribunes as "a brace of un-meriting, proud, violent and testy magistrates. Menenius's description of himself is also quite amusing, while his censure of the two tribunes is quite humorous in its ridicule. Indeed, Menenius shows quite a talent for mockery. Perhaps Brutus, one of the tribunes, correctly says that Menenius is "a perfecter giber for the table than a necessary bencher in the Capitol."

We get some more humour in the dialogue of the citizens when they go forth to elect their consul. "Ingratitude is monstrous ; and for the multitude to be ungrateful were to make a monster of the multitude," says the Third Citizen with a conscious play upon words. The Third Citizen also makes the humorous remark that if all the wits of the different citizens were to emerge from one skull, they would fly in different directions, thus showing the diversity of the citizens. When the Second Citizen asks which way his wit would fly, the Third Citizen humorously says that his wit will not fly at all as it is stuck in a block-head. There is also an element of comedy in Coriolanus's mocking and jeering manner of seeking the votes of the people, although the humour here is bitter and cynical, as in the case of Menenius's mockery of the tribunes.

The servants' treatment of Coriolanus and Coriolanus's handling of the servants at the house of Aufidius are also somewhat amusing. The second servant, on seeing Coriolanus, says, "Has the porter his eyes in his head that he gives entrance to such companions ?" When the third servant asks Coriolanus where he lives, Coriolanus says, "Under the canopy ; in the city of kites and crows". When the third servant asks Coriolanus whether the latter has come to meddle with his master, Coriolanus replies, "Ay ; it is honester than to meddle with thy mistress." The conversation of the servants of Audifius among themselves is also quite amusing. Their comments on war and peace are both witty and shrewd. "This peace is nothing but to rust iron, increase tailors, and breed ballad-makers", says one of the servants.

Finally, we have an element of comedy in the way Menenius claims to be quite intimate with Coriolanus and tries to push his way through the guards in order to meet his friend.

The sentinels are firm in refusing him entry. Menenius threatens the sentinels with punishment by Coriolanus. There is irony in this threat because, when Coriolanus appears, he dismisses Menenius without listening to him. The contrast between what Menenius had anticipated and what he actually receives is amusing and comic, although there is here a strong element of pathos also.

Q. 23. Do you think that the title "Coriolanus" is suitable for the play ? Give reasons for your answer.

Ans. No other title could have suited the play better than "Coriolanus". The play deals with the fortunes and misfortunes of Coriolanus. The theme of the play is the rise and the fall of Coriolanus. Coriolanus is the central figure in the play. Throughout the play Coriolanus dominates the action. Most of our attention, in the course of our reading of the play, is focussed upon Coriolanus. It is true that other characters like Menenius, Volumnia, and Aufidius also attract our attention and excite our interest ; but Coriolanus is the principal character and he is supreme throughout the play. The play arouses our deepest admiration for Coriolanus, and our deepest sympathy for him as well. He is the tragic hero of the play, and in spite of his serious faults of pride, egoism and selfishness, he rises to heroic heights.

We meet Marcius in the very opening scene when he has not yet earned the title of Coriolanus. Before he actually appears before us, we learn from the citizens about his supreme contempt for them and their view that he is their chief enemy and "a very dog to the commonalty". We also learn from them about his great services to the country and about his egoism. When Marcius actually appears, he gives ample evidence of the view that we have formed about him from the talk of the citizens. A little later, though he is appointed to a position under the command of Cominius, we yet get the feeling that he is a greater warrior than his commander, a feeling which is confirmed in the battle scenes that follow. Barring Scene ii of Act I in which Aufidius is shown talking to the senators of Corioli, Marcius dominates every scene of this Act, even the last scene where Aufidius forms a resolve to kill him by hook or by crook. Marcius's valour in the battle scenes and Cominius's tributes to that valour raise Marcius to the status of a hero in our eyes.

The whole of Act II is again dominated by Coriolanus; even the scene in which Menenius talks to the tribunes, the main subject of conversation is Marcius. Brutus's eloquent description of the cordial reception given to Coriolanus by the Romans serves to add to the stature of Coriolanus. Cominius's description of Coriolanus's heroic deeds raises Coriolanus almost to the status of a demi-god. We next see him seeking the votes of the people, though in a tone of mockery, and succeeding in the election. A little later the two tribunes address the people and the subject of their talk is Coriolanus, Coriolanus's contempt for the people, Coriolanus's pride, and the danger of Coriolanus's becoming a dictator.

Act III leads up to the climax of the first part of the play. This climax is Coriolanus's banishment. In this Act, we see the arrogance of Coriolanus, his complete lack of self-control, his hot temper, and his rashness by means of which he brings down upon himself the punishment of banishment. In act IV we see Coriolanus bidding farewell to his friends and relations in a touching manner and revealing to us the amiable side of his character. Then we find him arriving at the house of Aufidius in Antium where he makes up with his old enemy and forms an alliance with him for the destruction of Rome. Of course, we see him here in a very unfavourable light, proving himself a traitor to his country. Some time later, we find Coriolanus eclipsing Aufiidius in the eyes of Aufidius's own soldiers, so that Coriolanus's supreme position in the play does not suffer even when he is in the midst of those who have been his enemies in the past. In Act V Coriolanus becomes more important than before, with the fate of Rome at his mercy, with Cominius and Menenius not even receiving a patient hearing from him. He shows a steel resolution even in the face of the appeal of the ladies of Rome and bends only when his mother rebukes him in harsh terms. Aufidius now gets the opportunity he has been waiting for and, back in Corioli, he brings about Coriolanus's assassination which excites our deepest sympathy for the murdered hero. We agree with the Second Lord who says to Aufidius, "Thou hast done a deed whereat valour will weep". This brief account of the progress of the play clearly shows that no other title but the title of the hero could have done justice to the play.

Q. 24. Write a brief critical appreciation of *Coriolanus*.

Ans. Based on Plutarch's *Lives* : *Coriolanus* deals with the events of a few years of ancient Roman history, and is based on the narrative in Plutarch's *Lives* as translated into English by Sir Thomas North. Shakespeare has followed his source closely, and at certain places has even borrowed the language of his source. Further, he moulds his material to suit the needs of the dramatic form. There are in the play examples of a compression of the available material, of omissions of certain incidents, and of a few additions to the data available. In each case, the justification lies in the compactness or concentration of dramatic effect that has been achieved in the play.

A political play : The predominant atmosphere of the play is political. The play deals with actual historical personalities and actual political events pertaining to a period of ancient history. The wars between the Romans and the Volscians, the election of Coriolanus to the consulship of Rome and his banishment from Rome, Coriolanus's alliance with Aufidius and his threat to destroy Rome, and the assassination of Coriolanus are all political events. Besides, the arguments for and against democracy and aristocracy, the rights and the privileges of the people, and the dangers of dictatorship have been fully stated in the play. But it should not be taken to mean that Shakespeare had any political theory or doctrine as his motives for the writing of this play. There is no doubt that Shakespeare shows his anti-democratic leanings in the way in which he has depicted the Roman mob ; but Shakespeare never had any intention of producing a political document or of presenting a political thesis. His real interest was the study of human character. He found these political events and political characters as providing a rich scope for character-study.

Plot construction : The plot of this play is extremely simple. The play has a single plot, with no sub-plots or underplots ; and there is no complexity of any kind. The play falls into two clear divisions. In the first part of the play, we have the rise of Coriolanus, his election to the consulship, and his subsequent banishment. In the second part of the play, we have his alliance with Aufidius, his rise to power once again, and his assassination. In both the parts of the play, Marcius is

shown rising to the height of power and then meeting his down-fall. The play possesses a perfect unity of action, because all the events find their climax or culmination in the person of Coriolanus who is the central figure and the tragic hero of the play. There is unity also in the sense that the main interest of the play centres in Coriolanus, with no other character claiming so much of our attention.

Characterisation : The character of Coriolanus is completely drawn, and his virtues and faults clearly revealed. The pride, arrogance, egoism, selfishness, and lack of genuine patriotism are his principal faults which bring about his down-fall. His valour, his modesty, and certain human qualities in him, win him our admiration and sympathy. Menenius, Volumnia, Aufidius and the two tribunes are also vividly sketched. The contrasts of character lend further interest to the play. Coriolanus is contrasted with Menenius, with Anfidius, and with Cominius. The women characters too present interesting contrasts. Volumnia is depicted as masculine and fierce ; while Virgilia is shown as gentle and soft, and tender. Volumnia has a copious tongue while Virgilia is described as "gracious silence". Valeria serves as a foil to both Volumnia and Virgilia.

The sombre mood of the play : Coriolanus belongs to the later part of the third period of Shakespeare's creative activity and shares the mental outlook of the plays of that period, such as *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Timon of Athens*. These may be called the dramas of despair. The prevailing atmosphere in *Coriolanus* is sad and sombre, although there are occasional touches of light comedy. Human nature is shown in this play as weak, and there is scarcely a character who claims our fullest sympathy. Shakespeare was passing through a period of gloom and pessimism when he wrote these plays of the later part of the third period of his dramatic composition.

Style : *Coriolanus* does not have the limpidity and finish of *Julius Caesar* or of *Hamlet*. The music is rugged ; there is an abrupt terseness of phrase that makes us feel that Shakespeare is straining his language to a fuller meaning than it can bear in such phrases as "his pupil-age man-entered thus" (11. ii. 96). The effects gained are often more wonderful than those of earlier plays but they are volcanic rather than beautiful, "explosions of sublimity or pathos" as Bradley calls them.

Conclusion : Swinburne said about this play, "A loftier or more perfect piece of work was never done in all the world than this tragedy of Coriolanus". For Hudson, the play represents Shakespeare's highest maturity of thought and power. Bradley places this play beside the great tragedies of *Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *Othello*. Middleton Murry talks about its economy, its swiftness, its solidity, and its astonishing clarity and poignancy of language. And John Palmer praises the play for its boldness, simplicity, weight, and substance.

Explanations of Important Passages with Reference to the Context

1. What authority surfeits on would relieve us ; if they would yield us but the superfluity while it were wholesome, we might guess they relieved us humanely ; but they think we are too dear : the leanness that afflicts us, the object of our misery, is as an inventory to particularise their abundance ; our sufferance is a gain to them. (*Act I, sc. i lines 16 ff.*)

Context : These lines are part of a speech by the First Citizen who is speaking to his fellow citizens in the play *Coriolanus*. In these lines, the First Citizen states the grievances of the people against the patricians.

Explanation : The First Citizen says that if the noblemen, who wield power in the state, were to give to the people that part of food which was surplus with them, the misery of the people would be relieved. If the patricians gave to the people just as much food as the patricians themselves did not need, the people would be inclined to think that the patricians were prompted by feelings of kindness and sympathy in helping the people, provided the patricians gave that food before it became unfit for human consumption. But, in the opinion of the patricians, the people are not worth keeping alive at such a cost. The hunger, from which the people suffer and which is the sign of their distress, serves by way of contrast to make the patricians aware of their own well-fed condition. Each item of the people's want corresponds to some item of the plenty which the patricians enjoy. Indeed, the misery of the people seems to add something to the patricians' enjoyment of their prosperity.

2. They ne'er cared for us yet : suffer us to famish, and their store-houses crammed with grain ; make edicts for usury, to support usurers ; repeal daily any wholesome act established against the rich, and provide more piercing statutes daily, to chain up and restrain the poor. If the wars eat us not up, they will ; and there's all the love they bear us. (*Act I, sc. i lines 80 ff.*)

Context : These lines are a speech by the First Citizen

who is speaking to Menenius in the play *Coriolanus.* The First Citizen is stating the grievances of the people against the patricians.

Explanation : The First Citizen says that the patricians have never so far cared for the welfare of the people. The patricians are content to see the people starving, while all the time their own store-houses are bursting with an abundance of corn. The patricians, the First Citizen goes on to say, frame resolutions in favour of high rates of interest, whereby the greedy money-lenders are enabled to enrich themselves. Everyday the patricians go further in withdrawing those acts which serve as a protection to the people against the rich, and the patricians enforce more and more rigid and cruel laws to curb, and to impose restrictions on, the poor people. If the wars do not make an end of the people, the nobles will certainly bring about the death of the people by starvation, and that is about all the love that the patricians feel for the people. There is much bitterness in this speech of the First Citizen who is conveying to Menenius the sentiments of the common people in general.

3. *The senators of Rome are this good belly,*
And you the mutinous members ; for examine
Their counsels and their cares, digest things
Rightly touching the weal o' the common, you shall
Find no public benefit which you receive
But it proceeds or comes from them to you
And no way from yourselves.

(*Act I, sc. i lines 140 ff.*)

Context : These lines are spoken by Menenius to the mutinous crowd in the play *Coriolanus*. Menenius is trying to soothe the crowd who are agitating against the patricians. Menenius has narrated to the crowd the fable of the belly and, in these lines, draws his conclusion.

Explanation : Menenius compares the Roman senators to the good belly, and the rebellious people of Rome to those organs of the body which rebelled against the good belly. Menenius tells the people that the senators feel much concern for the people and that they hold frequent discussions to decide upon measures for the welfare of the people. Menenius asks the crowd to consider the matter impartially and to turn over in their minds how the

public welfare stands. He goes on to say that every public benefit which the people enjoy originates in the senators or is conferred upon them by the senators, but that in no way is any public benefit of the people's making.

4. *That would you have, you curs,*
That like nor peace nor war ? the one affrights you
The other makes you proud. He that trusts to you
Where he should find you lions, finds you hares.
Where foxes, geese : you are no surer, no,
Than is the coal of fire upon the ice,
Or hailstone in the sun. Your virtue is
To make him worthy whose offence subdues him
And curse that justice did it.

(*Act I, sc. i lines 170 ff.*)

Context : These lines are part of a speech by Marcius who is speaking to the mutinous crowd in the play *Coriolanus.* Marcius administers a harsh rebuke to the people for their agitation against the patricians.

Explanation : Marcius addresses the people as low-breed dogs, and asks them what they want. He accuses them of neither liking peace which merely puffs them up with arrogance, nor war, which terrifies them. It is wrong for anybody to trust the people, says Marcius, because one expects them to be brave like lions finds them to be timid like hares and one who expects them to be cunning like foxes discovers them to be stupid like geese. Marcius goes on to say that the people have no more steadfastness and endurance than a coal which quickly burns itself out if put upon ice, or than a hail stone which quickly melts in the heat of the sun. The excellence of the people consists in honouring a man whose wicked actions have brought him to ruin, and in cursing an act of justice which has punished that man for his wicked actions. Marcius, in this last remark, is ironical.

5. *They'll sit by the fire, and presume to know*
What's done i' the Capitol ; who's like to rise,
Who thrives and who declines ; side factions and give out
Conjectural marriages ; making parties strong,
And feebling such as stand not in their liking
Below their cobbled shoes. (*Act I, sc. i lines 194 ff.*)

Context : These lines are a speech by Marcius who is

talking to Menenius in the presence of the mutinous crowd in the play *Coriolanus*. Marcius has spoken words of harsh rebuke and of abuse to the crowd and, in these lines, goes on to make a few more accusations against them.

Explanation : Marcius says that the people of Rome sit at home by their fires and yet have the shamelessness to claim that they know how state affairs are managed. The people falsely claim to know who is likely to rise, who has become prosperous and who is falling from power. Coriolanus goes on to say that the people, talking in an idle manner, will give their support to one party or another, will speak of alliances based purely upon foolish guesses, will attribute great power to those parties whom they admire, and will trample with their clumsy shoes upon those whom they dislike.

6. *Fame, at the which he aims,*
In whom already he's well graced, cannot
Better be held, nor more attain'd than by
A place below the first : for what miscarries
Shall be the general's fault, though he perform
To the utmost of a man ; and giddy censure
Will then cry out of Marcius, 'O, if he
Had borne the business !'

(*Act I, sc. i lines 265 ff.*)

Context : These lines are spoken by Brutus, one of the tribunes, to Sicinius, a fellow tribune, in the play *Coriolanus*. Marcius has accepted a subordinate position under the command of Cominius in the campaign against the Volscians. Brutus here gives his own reason for Marcius's agreeing to serve under Cominius.

Explanation : Brutus says that Marcius has already been well-favoured with fame and that Marcius's object now is to earn more fame. Fame can be held securely, and acquired in fuller measure, only by one who occupies a position subordinate to the chief commander. If anything goes wrong, it will be regarded as the fault of the chief commander even though the chief commander's performance be as complete as is possible to any man. In that case, says Brutus, the fickle opinion of the multitude will thus declare itself about Marcius, "How different the result would have been if Marcius had been the chief commander of the forces !" Thus, in Brutus's opinion, Marcius has

accepted a subordinate position from motives of policy. Brutus is, of course, quite mistaken in thus interpreting Marcius's motive.

7. *Then his good report should have been my son : I therein would have found issue. Hear me profess sincerely ; had I a dozen sons, each in love alike and none less dear than thine and my good Marcius, I had rather had eleven die nobly for their country than one voluptuously surfeit out of action.*

(*Act, I sc. iii lines 20 ff.*)

Context : These lines are a speech by Volumnia speaking to her daughter-in-law Virgilia in the play *Coriolanus*. In these lines we clearly see Volumnia's delight in war and her view that the greatest quality of a man is valour in war. Virgilia has asked Volumnia how she would have felt if Marcius had been killed in the war to which she sent him when he still was quite young. Volumnia replies to this question in the lines quoted here.

Explanation : Volumnia says that if Marcius had been killed in the war, the fame earned by him would have been to her in the place of her son, and she would have cherished his fame as though it had been the offspring of her womb. Volumnia adds that if she had a dozen sons, each of them equally dear, and none of them less dear than good Marcius who is deeply loved by both his mother and wife, she should be more glad if eleven of them die bravely in the service of their country than if one of them lives a life of sheer inactivity and of pleasure and over-indulgence. In these lines, spoken by Volumnia, we clearly see Volumnia's deep patriotism and her admiration for military glory.

8. *Away, you fool : it more becomes a man*
Than gilt his trophy : the breasts of Hecuba,
When she did suckle Hector, look'd not lovelier
Than Hector's forehead when it spit forth blood
At Grecian sword, contemning.

(*Act I, sc. iii lines 39 ff.*)

Context : These lines are a speech by Volumnia to Virgilia in *Coriolanus*. Virgilia has expressed her horror of blood, especially because Volumnia imagines Marcius as wounded in the Volscian war. Volumnia impatiently dismisses Virgilia's fear.

Explanation : Volumnia asks Virgilia not to talk in a foolish manner and not to think that the wounds of a soldier are a calamity for him. She goes on to say that blood adorns a man better than the plating of gold adorns a monument erected to him. She then makes a reference to Hector, an ancient warrior of Troy. Volumnia says that the breasts of Hector's mother (Hecuba), when she suckled Hector, did not look more beautiful than Hector's wounded and bleeding forehead when Hector fought against his Grecian enemies, feeling a great contempt for them. In other words, Hector's bleeding forehead in the battle looked more beautiful than the breasts of his mother Hecuba when she suckled him as a child. What Volumnia means to say is that a man's wounds, received in fighting, are a more attractive sight than even the breasts of a woman. In order to illustrate this idea, Volumnia cites the example of one of the greatest Trojan heroes who showed conspicuous bravery in the war of Troy.

9. *You would be another Penelope : yet they say, all the yarn she spun in Ulysses' absence did but fill Itchaca full of moths. Come ; I would your cambric were sensible as your finger, that you might leave pricking it for pity.*

(Act I, sc. iii lines 80 ff.)

Context : These lines are part of a speech by Valeria who is talking to Virgilia in the play *Coriolanus*. Valeria has asked Virgilia to go out of doors with her. But Virgilia is in no mood to leave the house during the absence of her husband. Valeria makes a joke with Virgilia in the lines quoted here.

Explanation : Valeria humorously compares Virgilia to Penelope. Penelope was the devoted wife of Ulysses, the king of Ithaca. When Ulysses went away on his long wanderings, several suitors offered to marry Penelope. Penelope kept putting off the suitors with the pretext that she would marry one of them after she had finished weaving a garment. Actually she used to undo during the night what she had woven during the day. Virgilia's refusal to go out of doors during the absence of her husband is here compared to Penelope's devotion to Ulysses. Valeria points out that all the spinning and weaving of Penelope during the absence of Ulysses served no purpose at all, meaning thereby that Virgilia's staying at home during the absence of Marcius would serve no purpose. If the linen on which Virgilia

was doing needle-work were as sensitive to the prick of the needle as the human finger is, Virgilia would probably give up the needle-work out of sympathy for the linen. Only if the linen was sensitive like a human finger, would Virgilia give up the needle-work and go out of doors. Valeria here talks in a light-hearted, joking manner.

(*Ulysses*—He was the king of the island of Ithaca, and he was one of the warriors who took part in the war of Troy. *Penelope*—she was the devoted wife of Ulysses. *Yarn*—thread. *Cambric*—linen ; cloth).

10. Boils and plagues
Plaster you o'er ; that you may be abhorr'd
Further than seen, and one infect another
Against the wind a mile : You souls of geese,
That bear the shapes of men, how have you run
From slaves that apes would beat : Pluto and hell :
(*Act I, sc. iv lines 31 ff.*)

Context : These lines are part of an angry speech by Marcius to his retreating soldiers in the play *Coriolanus*. Marcius feels greatly annoyed with his soldiers for their cowardly retreat and rebukes them severely, uttering a curse on them.

Explanation : Marcius would like his soldiers to be covered from head to foot with boils and plague-sores so that the foul smell coming from their bodies should make them hateful even when they are too far away to be visible. Marcius wishes the infection of the soldiers to be carried from one to another over a long distance in the teeth of the wind. Marcius says that his soldiers have the bodies of human beings but the cowardly spirit of geese. The soldiers have degraded themselves by running away from the enemies who are so worthless and timid that even apes would have been able to drive them back. Marcius calls down the wrath of the god of hell upon his soldiers.

(*Souls of geese*—cowardly spirits. *Pluto*—the god of hell).

11. Pary now, no more : my mother,
Who has a charter to extol her blood,
When she does praise me grieves me. I have done
As you have done: that's what I can : induced

As you have been ; that's for my country :
He that has but effected his good will
Hath overta'en mine act.

(*Act I, sc. ix lines 13 ff.*)

Context : These lines are a speech by Marcius to Lartius in the play *Coriolanus*. Marcius has shown his extraordinary valour in the battle against the Volscians. Lartius utters words of high praise for Marcius, but Marcius would not like to hear himself being praised.

Explanation : Marcius appeals to to Lartius not praise him any more. Words of praise hurt him, even when spoken by his mother who has a right to praise her son. Marcius says that he has done no more than Lartius himself. He has done whatever he could to serve his country, and he was prompted to do so by his patriotism just as Lartius himself has been prompted by patriotism. Anyone, who has with determination carried out his task, has placed himself on an equal footing with Marcius. In this speech, Marcius shows his quality of modesty.

(*Charter*—right ; liberty. *To extol*—to praise highly. *Her blood*—her offspring ; her son).

12. *May these same instruments, which you profane,*
Never sound more : When drums and trumpets shall
I' the field prove flatterers, let courts and cities be
Made all of false-faced soothing
When steel grows soft as the parasite's silk,
Let him be made a coverture for the wars !
No more, I say. (*Act I, sc. ix lines 41 ff.*)

Context :These lines are part of a speech by Marcius in the play *Coriolanus*. Cominius has paid a tribute to Marcius for Marcius's exceptional bravery in fighting and the soldiers have joined in the tribute by beating the drums, by blowing the trumpets, and by throwing their caps and lances up into the air. Marcius, not wishing to hear himself praised, rebukes the soldiers for beating the drums, blowing the trumpets, and throwing up their lances in order to honour him.

Explanation : Marcius says that the soldiers have

insulted the drums and the trumpets by using them for the purpose of proclaiming his triumph. If drums and trumpets begin to be used in war for the purpose of flattery, courts and cities will be made up of cringing hypocrisy and nothing else. When steel grows soft as the silken garments of the humble dependents of rich men, let silk be used as a protection against the weapons of attack. If drums and trumpets of war are to be used for proclaiming his victory, let these instruments never sound again. He would have no more of such flattery, says Marcius.

(*Profane*—insult ; degrade. *False-faced soothing*—hypocritical flattery. *Parasite*—hanger-on ; an idler who feeds at the cost of a rich man. *Coverture*—protective covering).

13. By the elements,
If e'er again I meet him beard to beard,
He's mine, or I am his : mine emulation
Hath not that honour in't it had ; for where
I thought to crush him in an equal force.
True sword to sword, I'll potch at him some way
Or wrath or craft may get him.

(*Act I sc. x lines 11 ff.*)

Context : These lines are part of a speech by Aufidius who is talking to one of his soldiers in the play *Coriolanus*. Aufidius has been defeated once again by Marcius in an armed encounter. Aufidius here forms a resolve to kill his enemy by fair means or foul.

Explanation : Aufidius takes a vow that, if ever again he meets Marcius face to face, either he will kill Marcius or he will perish at the hands of Marcius. The next battle with Marcius must prove decisive. Aufidius goes on to say that his rivalry with Marcius is no longer of that honourable nature which once it was. Previously Aufidius had hoped to meet Marcius in a hand to hand battle and to crush Marcius in fair and open fight ; but now he will seek to kill Marcius by all possible means, whether by his fury or by cunning.

14. My valour's poison'd
With only suffering stain by him ; for him
Shall fly out of itself : nor sleep nor sanctuary
Being naked, sick, nor fane nor Capitol ;

The prayers of priests nor times of sacrifice,
Embarquements all of fury, shall lift up
Their rotten privilege and custom 'gainst
My hate to Marcius : where I find him, were it
At home, upon my brother's guard, even there,
Against the hospitable canon, would I
Wash my fierce hand in's heart.

(*Act I, sc. x lines 17 ff.*)

Context : These lines are a speech by Aufidius to one of his soldiers in the play *Coriolanus*. Aufidius has been defeated by Marcius for the fifth time in an armed encounter. He now forms a resolve to kill Marcius by all possible means, even if it be by unfair means.

Explanation : Aufidius says that his valour has lost its healthy character merely because it has been surpassed by Marcius's valour. His valour, says Aufidius, shall now give up its natural character. Aufidius goes on to declare his determination to kill Marcius, no matter what means may have to be employed for the purpose. Whether Marcius is sleeping, whether he has taken refuge in a temple, whether he is naked or ill, whether he is engaged in worship, whether the priests plead on his behalf, whether the time is such as to render the act of murder doubly sinful—none of these reasons will prevent him from killing Marcius. These reasons should normally restrain the fury of a man, because the force of these reasons has been recognised and established for a long time ; but these reasons will have no force against the hatred which Aufidius feels for Marcius. He will kill Marcius wherever he finds him, even if Marcius is found at the very house of Aufidius under the protection of Aufidius's own brother. Such an action will be against the code of hospitality but he must satisfy his fierce enmity by killing Marcius.

15. I am known to be a humorous patrician, and one that loves a cup of hot wine with not a drop of allaying. Tiber in 't ; said to be something imperfect in favouring the first complaint ;

hasty and tinder-like upon too trivial, motion ; one that converses more with the buttock of the night than with the forehead of the morning ; what I think I utter, and spend my malice in my breath.

(*Act II, sc. i lines 47 ff.*)

Context : These lines are part of a speech by Menenius who is talking to the two tribunes in the play *Coriolanus*. The tribunes have accused Marcius of pride. Menenius takes the side of Marcius and scolds the tribunes. In these lines Menenius describes his own temperament.

Explanation : Menenius says that he is known to be a light-hearted man who loves a cup of hot wine with not a drop of water to dilute it. He is commonly reported to have the fault of deciding in the favour of the first complainant without waiting to hear the other side. He is said to be harsh and excitable over even the smallest provocation. He is one who goes to bed late at night rather than gets up early in the morning. He makes no secret of his thoughts and, though he is quick to lose his temper, yet his anger subsides as soon as he has given expression to it.

(*Tiber*—the name of a river which flows through the city of Rome ; here it means water in general. *Tinder*—spark of fire).

16. Meeting two such wealsmen as you are—I cannot call you Lycurguses—if the drink you give me touch my palate adversely, I make a crooked face at it. I can't say your worships have delivered the matter well, when I find the ass in compound with the major part of your syllables : and though I must be content to bear with those that say you are reverend grave men, yet they lie deadly that tell you have good faces. If you see this in the map of my microcosm, follows it that I am known well enough too ? What harm can your bisson conspectuities glean out of his character, if I am known well enough too ?

(*Act II, sc. i lines 54 ff.*)

Context : These lines are part of a speech by Menenius who is talking to the tribunes in the play *Coriolanus*. Sicinius has said in a sarcastic manner that Menenius is known well enough,

whereupon Menenius gives a description of himself, at the same time speaking words of ridicule about the tribunes.

Explanation: Menenius ironically ca'ls the two tribunes careful guardians of the public welfare, though it is not possible for him to compare their wisdom to Lycurgus, the famous Spartan law-giver. Menenius says that he cannot help showing his irritation when the tribunes use the language which irritates him. It is not possible for him to say that the honoured tribunes have spoken wisely when he finds the element of stupidity so prominent in most of their conversation. He accuses them of having told a terrible lie even though there are people who consider the tribunes highly respectable and serious-minded persons. Menenius goes on to say that if his description of himself is obvious to the tribunes from his face, it does not follow that he, like them, is well. known enough too. Furthermore, if he is well known enough, there is nothing in his character that the nearly blind vision of the tribunes can find as being objectionable.

(*Wealsmen*—well-wishers of the public; custodians of public welfare. *Touch my palate adversely*—irritate me. *The ass*—stupidity. *In compound with*—mixed with. *Map of my microcosm*—my face. *Bisson*—nearly blind. *Conspectuities*—visions.

17. You are ambitious for poor knaves' caps and and legs: you wear out a good wholesome forenoon in hearing a cause between an orange-wife and a fosset-seller, and rejourn the controversy of three pence to a second day of audience. When you are hearing a matter between party and party, if you chance to be pinched with the colic, you make faces like mummers, set up the bloody flag against all patience; and dismiss the controversy bleeding, the more entangled by your hearing: all the peace you make in their cause is calling both the parties knaves. You are a pair of strange ones.

(*Act II, sc. i lines 68 ff.*)

Context: These lines are a speech by Menenius to the ribunes in the play *Coriolanus*. The two tribunes have called Aarcius a proud man. Menenius defends Marcius against this charge. In the lines quoted here, he pours ridicule on the tribunes.

Explanation : Menenius says that the chief desire of the tribunes is that poor people should take off their caps and should bow low before them. The tribunes waste a whole forenoon, which might be utilised more profitably, in hearing a dispute between an orange-selling woman and a seller of trifles; and having heard the dispute they postpone the decision to the next day although the petty dispute could have been settled in five minutes by any sensible man. While hearing a dispute between two parties, if the tribunes happen to suffer from colic, they make faces like buffoons, and they declare war against all patience. They send the litigants away without settling their dispute so that the litigants find themselves in a state of still greater confusion as a result of the foolish intervention of the tribunes. The only effort the tribunes make in adjusting the difference between the two litigants is to scold both the parties. Menenius ends his speech by calling the tribunes a pair of strange fellows.

(***Wear out***—spend ; waste. ***Wholesome forenoon***—forenoon which might be utilised profitably. ***Fosset-seller***—seller of trifles. ***Rejourn***—adjourn ; postpone. ***Mummers***—buffoons. ***Set the bloody flag***—declare war.)

18. Our very priests must become mockers, if they shall encounter such ridiculous subjects as you are. When you speak best unto the purpose, it is not worth the wagging of your beards; and your beards deserve not so honourable a grave as to stuff a botcher's cushion, or to be entombed in an ass's pack saddle.

(*Act II, sc. i, lines 76 ff.*)

Context : These lines are part of a speech made by Menenius to the two tribunes in the play *Coriolanus*. The two tribunes have expressed the opinion that Marcius is a very proud man, whereupon Menenius takes the two tribunes to task, mocking them, scolding them and pouring ridicule upon them.

Explanation : Menenius says that the very priests, who are expected to maintain a serious expression on their faces, will be unable to resist laughing when they come across such absurd fellows as the tribunes. Even when the remarks of the tribunes are most pertinent, there is no justification for them to wag their beards, as if to show their wisdom. In other

vords, even their pertinent remarks are nothing to be proud of. As for the beards of the tribunes, these beards do not have merit enough even to serve as the padding for the seat of a cobbler or for the saddle of a donkey.

(*Botcher*—patcher of old clothes, or a cobbler. *Ass's pack saddle*—saddle packed with goods which an ass must carry).

19. *All tongues speak of him, and the bleared sights*
Are spectacled to see him ; your prattling nurse
Into a rapture lets her baby cry
While she chats of him ; the kitchen malkin pins
Her richest lockram bout her reechy neck,
Clambering the walls to eye him : stalls, bulks,
windows,
Are smother'd up, leads fill'd and ridges horsed
With variable complexions, all agreeing
In earnestness to see him.

(*Act II, sc. i lines 194 ff.*)

Context : These lines are part of a speech made by Brutus to his fellow-tribune, Sicinius, in the play *Coriolanus*. Brutus here describes in a vivid and eloquent manner the enthusiastic reception given by the people of Rome to Marcius on his return from the Volscian war.

Explanation : Brutus says that everybody in Rome is peaking highly of Marcius. The dim-sighted old men have ut on their spectacles to take a look at Marcius. The talkative urses gossip about Marcius with so much interest that they nore the babies who cry and scream wildly for their attention. he kitchen maid dresses herself out in her best clothes and, itting on her finest kerchief round her smoke-covered neck, imbs up the walls to see him. Sheds outside shops, frame-orks projecting from shop-fronts, and windows are so crowded to be completely hidden. The lead-roofed tops of houses e filled with men. The wedge-shaped roofs are bestridden th people of different natures and temperaments, but all ving the same earnest desire to see Marcius.

(*Bleared sights*—dim-sighted old persons. *Prattling*—lkative. *Malkin*—maid. *Lockram*—cheap linen. *Reechy*—ered with smoke. *Bulks*—frame-works projecting from shop-

fronts. *Smothered up*—over-crowded. *Leads*—lead-covered roofs. *Variable complexions*—different natures and temperaments).

20. *Seld-shown flamens*
Do press among the popular throngs and puff
To win a vulgar station ; our veil'd dames
Commit the war of white and damask in
Their nicely-gawded cheeks to the wanton spoil
Of Phoebus' burning kisses : such a pother
As if that whatsoever god who leads him
Were slily crept into his human powers
And gave him graceful posture.

(*Act II, sc. i lines 202 ff.*)

Context : These lines are part of a speech by Brutus to his fellow-tribune, Sicinius, in the play *Coriolanus*. Brutus in his speech describes the enthusiasm of the people over the triumphant return of Marcius from the Volscian war. Old men, nurses, kitchen-maids and others have crowded the streets, the windows and the roofs of the houses in order to have a look at Marcius.

Explanation : Brutus says that even priests who rarely appear in public are bustling about among the multitude of the common people. The priests are breathless with their struggle to find a standing place. They would be glad if they could find a standing place even among the ordinary spectators. The high-born ladies of Rome are also very eager to see Marcius. These ladies are usually very careful in protecting from sunlight their carefully beautified cheeks which offer a mixture of the pure white and brilliant crimson. But now, in their excitement, the same ladies are exposing their cheeks to the cruel plunder of the burning sun. It seems that some god, who attends upon Marcius through life, has cunningly entered the human body of Marcius and gives him every grace of look and movement, thus making him the centre of attention.

(*Seld-shown*—rarely seen. *Flamens*—priests. *Nicely-gawded*—carefully adorned. *Wanton*—unscrupulous and merciless. *Spoil*—plunder. *Phoebus*—sun. *Pother*—excitement).

21. *I heard him swear,*
Were he to stand for consul, never would he
Appear i' the market-place nor on him put

The napless vesture of humility ;
Nor, showing, as the manner is, his wounds
To the people, beg their stinking breaths.

(*Act II, sc. i lines 220 ff.*)

Context : These lines are a speech by Brutus to his fellow-tribune, Sicinius, in the play *Coriolanus*. Marcius has returned triumphantly to Rome from the Volscian war. He has been received by the people with great enthusiasm and excitement. The tribunes have an apprehension that Marcius may now be elected to the consulship.

Explanation : In the lines quoted here, Brutus says that Marcius may not, after all, get the consulship. The pride of Marcius will most probably not permit him to follow the usual practice which a candidate for consulship was expected to follow. A candidate for the consulship was expected to put on the thread-bare gown of humility, to stand in the market place, to show the scars of wounds received in fighting for his country, and to canvass for the votes of the people. Marcius had once sworn not to do these undignified things in order to get the consulship. Marcius holds the people in contempt and thinks that the people have foul breaths. With this contempt for the people, Marcius would not humiliate himself by putting on the gown of humility and by begging the votes of the people.

22. *This, as you say, suggested*
At some time when his soaring insolence
Shall touch the people-which time shall not want,
If he be put upon't and that's as easy
As to set dogs on sheep will be his fire
To kindle their dry stubble ; and their blaze
Shall darken him for ever.

(*Act II, sc. i 243 ff.*)

Context : These lines are a speech by Sicinius to his fellow-tribune, Brutus, in the play *Coriolanus*. Brutus has suggested that the people should be instigated against Marcius. Sicinius agrees.

Explanation : Sicinius says that the people should be instigated at a time when they feel irritated by the increasing arrogance of Marcius. Such a time, says Sicinius, will surely come if Marcius be provoked to a display of his arrogance.

And it will be as easy to provoke him as it is to set dogs to worry sheep. Marcius's arrogance will be the spark to put the common people on fire with anger. The anger of the people is as ready to take fire as dry stubble, and their fire will for ever darken his glory, says Sicinius.

(*Soaring insolence*—increasing arrogance. *Shall touch the people*—shall irritate the people. *Stubble*—short ends of cornstalks left after reaping. Dry stubble catches fire quickly. *Darken him*—obscure his glory).

23. *I have seen the dumb men throng to see him and*
The blind to hear him speak ; matrons flung gloves,
Ladies and maids their scarfs and handkerchers,
Upon him as he pass'd : the nobles bended,
As to Jove's statue, and the commons made
A shower and thunder with their caps and shouts :
I never saw the like.

(*Act II, sc. i lines 251 ff.*)

Context : These lines are a speech by a messenger who brings a message for the tribunes in the play *Coriolanus*. The messenger informs the tribunes that they are wanted in the senate-house, and then goes on to describe the enthusiasm of the commoners and of the nobles at Marcius's triumphant return from the Volscian war.

Explanation : The messenger says that he has seen dumb men crowding to see Marcius and the blind men crowding to listen to his words. Elderly women threw their gloves at Marcius to show their favour. Ladies and maids threw scarfs and handkerchiefs at him as he passed, to show their admiration for him. The nobles bowed to him as they bow to the statue of Jove. The common people made a shower by throwing up their caps and they produced a thunderous noise with their shouts. The messenger says that he never saw such a sight before.

(*Throng*—crowd. *Matrons*—elderly women. *Jove*—the chief Roman god.)

24. *If he did not care whether he had their love or no, he waved indifferently 'twixt doing them neither good nor harm ; but he seeks their hate with greater devotion than they can render it him ; and leaves nothing undone that they may fully discover him*

their opposite. Now, to seem to affect the malice and displeasure of the people is as bad as that which he dislikes, to flatter them for their love. (*Act II, sc. ii, lines 15 ff.*)

Context :— These lines are a speech by the First Officer talking to the Second Officer in the senate-hall in the play *Coriolanus*. The First Officer is here commenting upon the attitude of Marcius towards the people.

Explanation. According to the First Officer, Marcius shows a greater desire to earn the hatred of the people than the desire of the people to offer their hatred to him. Marcius does not show himself indifferent about the people's attitude towards him; nor does he show himself indifferent as to whether he does them good or harm. On the contrary, he spares no efforts to reveal himself as their enemy. He will certainly not flatter the people to win their love because he considers such a course of action worthy of contempt. But to make a show of seeking the ill-will and displeasure of the people is as bad as to flatter the people.

25. *He hath deserved worthily of his country; and his ascent is not by such easy degrees as those who, having been supple and courteous to the people, bonneted without any further need to have them at all into their estimation and report, but he hath so planted his honours in their eyes, and his actions in their hearts, that for their tongues to be silent and not confess so much, were a kind of ingrateful injury, to report otherwise were a malice that, giving itself the lie, would pluck reproof and rebuke from every ear that heard it.* (*Act II,sc. ii 22 ff.*)

Context : These lines are a speech by the Second Officer who is talking to the First Officer in the senate-hall in the play *Coriolanus*. The two officers are discussing the attitude of Marcius towards the common people and in these lines the Second Officer expresses his view of the matter.

Explanation : The Second Officer says that Marcius has served his country well enough to deserve appreciation and honour. Some persons become popular by their politeness and gentleness and by flattering the people without doing anything solid to win their good opinion and respect. But the rise of Marcius has not taken place by such easy degrees. Marcius has risen by brave actions, and he has firmly fixed his honourable qualities before the people's eyes and his great actions in their hearts. It would be both unjust and ungrateful on the part of the

people to remain silent and not to acknowledge the greatness of Marcius. If the people speak ill of him, they would be guilty of an unjust illwill. Such an attitude would only expose the people to strong disapproval and condemnation from every one.

(*Ascent*—rise. *Bonneted*—took off the cap as a mark of respect. *Report*—good opinion. *Pluck reproof*—draw rebuke.)

26. *At sixteen years,*
When Tarquin made a head for Rome, he fought
Beyond the mark of others : our then dictator,
Whom with all praise I point at, saw him fight,
When with his Amazonian chin he drove
The bristled lips before him : he bestrid
An o er—press'd Roman and i' the consul's view
Slew three opposers : Tarquin's self he met,
And struck him on his knee : in that day's feats,
When he might act the woman in the scene,
He proved best man i' the field, and for his meed
Was brow-bound with the oak.

(*Act II, sc. ii lines 84 ff.*)

Context : These lines are part of a speech by Cominius who is addressing the senators of Rome in the play *Coriolanus*. Cominius is giving an account of the brave deeds of Marcius.

Explanation. Cominius says that, at the age of sixteen, Marcius fought with greater bravery than any other warrior, when Tarquin invaded Rome. Marcius's bravery in the fighting was witnessed by the then Roman ruler who must be mentioned with all praise. Though yet a beardless young man, Marcius drove away much older soldiers during that war. Marcius went to the rescue of a Roman who had been attacked by a larger number of opponents than he could singly face, and in the consul's opinion Marcius killed three enemies in that encounter. Marcius faced Tarquin himself in the battle and struck a blow that brought Tarquin down on his knees. On that occasion, Marcius was still so young that he could have shown himself as timid as a woman. But he proved by his exploits to be the best warrior. And as a reward for his bravery, he was garlanded with oaken leaves.

(*Tarquin*—conqueror who invaded Rome but was defeated. *Amazonian chin*—beardless chin. The word "Amazon" means

a female warrior. *Bristled lips*—lips with moustaches growing on them ; lips of grown-up men. *Meed*—reward).

27. *His pupil age,*
Man-enter'd thus he waxed like a sea,
And in the brunt of seventeen battles since
He lurch'd all swords of the garland. For this last,
Before and in Corioli, let me say,
I cannot speak him home : he stopp'd the fliers :
And by his rare example made the coward
Turn terror into sport : as weeds before
A vessel under sail, so men obey'd
And fell below his stem : his sword, death's stamp,
Where it did mark, it took, (*Act II, sc. ii lines 95 ff.)*

Context : These lines are part of speech made by Cominius to the members of the Roman senate in the play *Coriolanus*. Cominius is giving an account of the brave deeds of Marcius who started his military career at the young age of sixteen.

Explanation : Cominius says that Marcius showed himself braver than a grown-up man, even when he had not yet attained his majority. In later years, Marcius grew limitlessly in daring and, since the first occasion, he has participated in seventeen battles. In all those battles, Marcius bore the shock of the attack. He not only robbed all swords of the garland, but carried away the garlands from them without much effort. As regards the battle fought outside Corioli and within the walls of Corioli, Cominius confesses that he cannot describe Marcius's bravery in adequate terms of praise. Marcius stopped his soldiers from running away from the battle-field. By his unique example, Marcius infused so much courage into those cowards that they fought bravely and found amusement in what had previously terrified them. The soldiers obeyed him and yielded to his pressure as weeds yield before a ship going on full speed with all its sails set. The sword of Marcius, which bore the stamp of death, proved fatal wherever it struck.

(*His pupil-age*—his years of immaturity. Waxed—increased (in daring). *Brunt*—shock of battle).

28. *From face to foot*
He was a thing of blood, whose every motion
Was timed with dying cries : alone he enter'd

The mortal gate of the city, which he painted
With shunless destiny ; aidless came off,
And with a sudden re-inforcement struck
Corioli like a planet : now all's his :

(*Act II, sc. ii lines 105ff.*)

Context : These lines are part of a speech by Cominius to the senators of Rome in the play *Coriolanus*. Cominius is giving an account to the senators of the brave fighting of Marcius in the Volscian war.

Explanation : Cominius, giving his account of the brave deeds of Marcius, says that Marcius looked a mass of blood from head to heels. The cries of the dying enemies kept time wit h each movement of his body just as a musical instrument keeps time with each movement of a dancer. Menenius entered the gates of Corioli all alone when death was raging all over the place. He set his bloody mark upon the city, thereby showing that it was the irresistible will of destiny that the city should belong to him. Without anyone to support him, he came out of the city and then, gathering his forces, made a quick assault upon Corioli. He struck the city like a great disaster caused by the influence of a planet. Thus he made himself master of Corioli.

(*Mortal gate*—gate where people were dying. *Shunless destiny*—inevitable fate ; irresistible will of destiny. *Aidless*—without any support.)

29. Our spoils he kick'd at,
And look'd upon things precious as they were
The common muck of the world : he covets less
Than misery itself would give towards
His deeds with doing them and is content
To spend the time to end it.

(*Act II, sc. ii, lines, 121 ff.*)

Context : These lines are a speech by Cominius to the senators of Rome in the play *Coriolanus*. Cominius has given a vivid and eloquent account of the brave deeds of Marcius. He has also described the fierce fighting of Marcius during the Volscian campaign. The speech quoted here comes as a conclusion to the account given by Cominius.

Explanation : Cominius tells the senators that Marcius

did not give the least sign of being greedy. Marcius rejected with contempt the booty and the plunder of war. He treated even the most valuable things as the merest filth. He had even less desire to possess those things than the desire of the wretched citizens to offer those things. In other words, the people of the conquered city were ready to offer their valuables to him. But he was not the least interested in the valuables. He found the reward for his deeds simply by doing those deeds. His only anxiety was to complete his task and he devoted all his energy and time to that task.

(*Spoils*—booty ; plundered goods. *Muck*—rubbish ; filth. *Covets*—feels a desire).

30. *I do beseech you,*
Let me o'erleap that custom, for I cannot
Put on the gown, stand naked and entreat them.
For my wounds' sake, to give their suffrage : please you
That I may pass this doing.

(*Act II, sc. ii lines 132 ff.*)

Context : These lines are a speech by Marcius to the senators in the play *Coriolanus*. The senators have decided that Marcius be elected to the consulship. They ask Marcius to go and seek the votes of the people.

Explanation : Marcius's pride does not allow him to go and beg the votes of the people. He would therefore like to be appointed to the consulship without having to seek the votes of the people. He makes a request to the senators to permit him to omit the custom of seeking the people's votes. Marcius would not like to put on the humble gown, to expose his naked body to show his wounds, and to appeal to the people to give him their votes for the sake of those wounds. He appeals to the senators not to feel offended with him, and to allow him to omit the procedure prescribed by custom.

(*Over-leap*—omit. *Beseech*—pray. *Entreat*—request. *Suffrage*—votes. *Pass this doing*—omit this procedure.

31. *You should account me the more virtuous that I have not been common in my love. I will, sir, flatter my sworn brother, the people, to earn a dear estimation of them : 'tis a condition they account genlte : and since the wisdom of their choice is rather*

to have my hat than my heart. I will practise the insinuating nod and be off to them most counterfeitly.

(Act II, sc. iii lines 87 ff.)

Context : These lines are a speech by Marcius to the citizens in the play *Coriolanus*. Marcius is seeking the votes of the people. One of the citizens acknowledges his services to the country, but points out that Marcius has never loved the common people. Marcius gives in these lines his reply to the citizens.

Explanation : Marcius says that the people should consider him the nobler for not having given his love cheaply to the common people. But it seems that the people in their wisdom attach more importance to the outward show of courtesy than to genuine love. He will, therefore, flatter the people who are his sworn brothers, in order to win from them a better opinion of himself. To follow that course will be to show a disposition which they consider sweet. He will, accordingly, try to win their favour by bowing to them and he will take off his cap to show his respect for them, even though the act of bowing and taking off his cap will be prompted not by any sincerity but merely by the desire to win the support of the people.

(*Dearer estimation*—better opinion. *Condition*—disposition. *They account*—they consider. *Insinuating*—aiming at winning the favour. *Counterfeitly*—falsely ; not genuinely).

32. *Better it is to die, better to starve,*
Than crave the hire which first we do deserve.
Why in this woolvish toge should I stand here,
The beg of Hob and Dick, that do appear.
Their needless vouches ? Custom calls me to't :
What custom wills, in all things should we do't.
The dust on antique time would lie unswept,
And mountainous error be too highly heapt
For truth to o'er-peer.

(Act II, sc. iii lines 105 ff).

Context : These lines are a speech by Marcius to himself. Marcius is seeking the votes of the people for the consulship, as required by custom. Inwardly, however, he feels very impatient at having to beg the votes of the people. He thinks

it a degradation and a humiliation. In these lines he expresses his real feelings.

Explanation : Marcius thinks that it would be better to die, that it would even be better to starve to death, than humbly to seek the votes of the people, votes which he can claim as a matter of right. It is a matter of shame that he should have to stand there wearing the gown of humility, in order to beg every Tom and Dick and Harry for their votes. It is like asking the common people to give him a certificate of merit when he has already established his merit and needs no testimonial. He must do all this because custom demands it. If we always do that which custom bids us do, we would be leaving the dust to accumulate on the records of old time, so that its character would be forgotten. Error in that case would reach such a height that truth would not be able to see its way on account of the obstacle. Thus Marcius condemns a blind obedience to custom.

(*Woolvish toge*—wool-less gown of humility. *Vouches*—testimony. *Mountainous*—enormous).

33. *Could you not have told him,*
As you were lesson'd, when he had no power,
But was your enemy ; ever spake against
Your liberties and the characters that you bear
I' the body of the weal : and now, arriving
A place of potency and sway o' the state,
If he should still malignantly remain
Fast foe to the plebeii, your voices might
Be curses to yourselves ? (*Act II, sc. iii, lines 168 ff.*)

Context : These lines are part of a speech by Brutus to the Roman citizens in the play *Coriolanus*. The citizens have given their votes to Marcius and elected him consul. Brutus is criticising this action of the Roman citizens.

Explanation : Brutus asks the mob why they did not accuse Marcius of being the enemy of the people when he was not the consul but an ordinary public servant. Brutus reminds the mob that he had previously instructed them what to say to Marcius at the time of the election. They should have accused him of opposing their rights and liberties which belonged to them as members of the commonwealth. They should have told him

that, if as the powerful consul of the Roman state he continued maliciously to be a determined enemy to the common people, their votes would prove to be curses to themselves. With such arguments, they should have expressed their hesitation and unwillingness to cast their votes in his favour.

(*Lesson'd*—instructed. *Charters*—rights.. *Weal*—commonwealth. *A place of potency and sway*—a position of power and authority. *Malignantly*—maliciously. *Plebeii*—the common people. *Voices*—votes).

34. Did you perceive
He did solicit you in free contempt
When he did need your loves ; and do you think
That his contempt shall not be bruising to you
When he hath power to crush ? Why, had your bodies
No heart among you ? or had you tongues to cry.
Against the rectorship of judgment ?

(*Act II. sc. iii. lines 201 ff.*)

Context : These lines are a speech by Brutus to the Roman mob in the play *Coriolanus*. The people have given their votes to Marcius and have elected him the consul of Rome. The two tribunes scold the mob for having voted for Marcius.

Explanation : Brutus tells the mob that Marcius appealed to them for votes with open contempt and that he showed his contempt for them at a time when their goodwill was very necessary to his purpose. Marcius's contempt will surely be dangerous to them when, as the consul, he acquires the power to rule and to oppress them. Brutus asks the citizens if they had only "bodies" at the time of the election and if they had no "feelings" to enable them to weigh their own interests. Brutus asks if they voted for him with their mouths only against all the dictates of wisdom.

(*Solicit*—beg; plead for votes.

Bruising—offensive; harmful. *Rectorship*—dictates).

35. Besides, forget not
With what contempt he wore the humble weed,
How in his suit he scorn'd you : but your loves
Thinking upon his services, took from you
The apprehension of his present portance,

Which most gibingly, ungravely, he did fashion
After the inveterate hate he bears you.

(*Act II sc. iii, lines 221 ff*).

Context : These lines are a speech by Sicinius, one of the two tribunes, to the Roman mob in the play *Coriolanus*. The people have given their votes to Marcius and have elected him to the consulship. The tribunes instigate the mob against Marcius and urge the mob to withdraw their votes.

Explanation : Sicinius asks the mob not to forget the great contempt with which Marcius wore the gown of humility and the great scorn which he showed towards them even when he sought their votes. Sicinius points out that Marcius scornfully, and without any dignity, moulded his behaviour towards the people so as to suit the chronic hatred which he felt for them. For this reason the people were unable to form a correct judgment of Marcius's behaviour. Their great goodwill for him was based upon his services to his country and it prevented them from forming the right opinion about him. In view of this, the only proper course for the people now was to withdraw their votes.

(*Humble weed*—the gown of humility. *In his suit*—in his appeal. *Apprehension*—proper under-standing. *Gibingly*—mockingly ; scornfully. *Ungravely*—without any dignity: *Inveterate*—chronic).

36. *Let them go on ;*
This mutiny were better put in hazard
Than stay, past doubt, for greater :
If, as his nature is, he fall in rage
With their refusal, both observe and answer
This vantage of his anger.

(*Act II sc. iii. lines 257 ff*).

Context : These lines are a speech by Brutus to his fellow tribune, Sicinius, in the play *Coriolanus*. The two tribunes have instigated the people against Marcius, and have prevailed upon them to withdraw their election of Marcius as the consul. The two tribunes feel quite satisfied with the result they have achieved.

Explanation : Brutus says that the people, who have been provoked against Marcius, should be allowed to take action

in the matter. He points out that it is better that they should at once take the risk of stirring a rebellion now than that they should wait for a greater risk which surely they shall have to face. If, in accordance with his temperament, Marcius feels enraged with the people's decision to withdraw their votes, it will be a good opportunity for them to watch and utilise. The anger of Marcius will provide the occasion for suitable action to be taken against Marcius.

37. *Is is a purposed thing, and grows by plot,*
To curb the will of the nobility :
Suffer't and live with such as cannot rule
Nor ever will be ruled.

(*Act III; sc. i lines 38 ff.*)

Context : These lines are a speech by Marcius in the play *Coriolanus*. The tribunes have instigated the mob against Marcius and they are ready to withdraw the votes with which they have elected Marcius to the consulship.

Explanation : Marcius says that the changed behaviour of the people is something planned. A conspiracy has been hatched to defeat the will of the senators. Marcius tells the senators that if they endure this sort of thing, they will have to live with such as have no capacity for ruling and at the same time will not allow others to them.

(*Purposed*—planned. *To curb*—to restrict. *Suffer't*—endure it).

I say again,
In soothing them, we nourish 'gainst our senate
The cockle of rebellion, insolence, sedition,
Which we ourselves have plough'd for, sow'd and scatter'd,
By mingling them with us, the honour'd number,
Who lack not virtue, no, nor power, but that
Which they have given to beggars.

(*Act III, sc. i lines 68 ff.*)

Context : These lines are part of a speech by Marcius to the senators in the play *Coriolanus*. Marcius here urges the senators to adopt a tough line in dealing with the commoners.

Explanation : Marcius says that, if the demands of the commoners are granted, it will encourage the growth of the

vile weed of rebellion, insolence, and disloyalty against the patricians. The patricians are themselves responsible for having prepared the soil for that weed, for having sown that weed, and for having spread it by allowing the common people to mix with the honourable patricians. The common people are to the patricians what a wild weed is to wheat. The patricians are not wanting in any virtue or any power except in so far as they have transferred it to the beggarly commoners.

(*Soothing*—flattering ; granting the demands. *Cockle*——weed. *Sedition*—speaking against the government).

39. *As for my country I have shed my blood,*
Not fearing outward force, so shall my lungs
Coin words till their decay against those measles,
Which we disdain should tetter us, yet sought
The very way to catch them.

(*Act III, sc. i, lines 76 ff.*)

Context : These lines are a speech by Marcius in the play *Coriolanus*. Marcius speaks against the people and, when he is urged by his fellow patricians not to speak in that manner, he persists in using harsh words for the people.

Explanation : Marcius says that he has shed blood in the service of his country without feeling afraid of his enemies. In the same fearless manner he will use abusive words for the commoners. He will not cease doing so till his lungs are exhausted. He calls the people "filthy rogues". The patricians scorn the commoners and would not like to be infected by them, and yet the patriricians have been so weak as to invite infection from the commoners. In this speech, Marcius condemns the people for being mean and degraded, and he rebukes the patricians for their weak attitude toward the commoners.

(*Measles*—filthy rogues. *Disdain*—scorn. *Tetter*—infect).

"*Shall*"

40. *O good but most unwise patricians ! why*
You grave but reckless senators, have you thus
Given Hydra here to choose an officer,
That with his peremptory "shall", being but

The horn and noise o' the monster's, wants not spirit
To say he'll turn your current in a ditch,
And make your channel his ? If he have power
Then vail your ignorance ; if none, awake
Your dangerous lenity. If you are learn'd,
Be not as common fools ; if you are not,
Let them have cushions by you.

(*Act III, sc. i, lines 92 ff.*)

Context : These lines are part of a speech by Marcius to his fellow patricians in the play *Coriolanus*. Marcius gets involved in a dispute with the tribunes for speaking against the commoners. One of the tribunes speaks to Marcius in a tone of authority, using the word "shall" in an imperative sense. Marcius urges the patricians not to adopt a soft attitude towards the tribunes and the people.

Explanation : Marcius calls the patricians "good" but unwise. They are earnest in appearance but they are heedless of the mischief around them. They have given to the many-headed multitude the right to choose their tribunes. The result is that they have chosen a tribune who has the daring to use the imperative "shall." The tribune has even the courage to say that he will compel the current of the action of the senate to flow within the narrow and muddy banks which he will prepare. The tribune, in other words, threatens to dictate to the senate. The tribune, who is no more than a noisy mouthpiece of the monstrous multitude, threatens to take over the authority which once belonged to the patricians and senators. If the tribune has, indeed, acquired that authority already, let the patricians pay for their ignorance by yielding to him. If that authority is stilll in the hands of the patricians, let the patricians rouse themselves from that mildness and dreaminess, which can prove dangerous to them. If the patricians think themselves wise, let them not behave like fools. If they are not wise, let the common people be allowed to sit comfortably by the side of the patricians.

(*Hydra*—the name of a many-headed monster in ancient mythology. *Peremptory*—authoritative. *Vail*—bow down. *Lenity*—mildness).

41. *They choose their magistrate,*
And such a one as he, who puts his "shall",
His popular "shall," against a graver bench
Than ever frown'd in Greece! By Jove himself!
It makes the consuls base: and my soul aches
To know, when two authorities are up,
Neither supreme, how soon confusion
May enter 'twixt the gap of both and take
The one by th' other.

(*Act III, sc. i, lines 104 ff.*)

Context: These lines are part of an angry speech by Marcius in the play *Coriolanus*. Marcius is urging the patricians to take a firm line in dealing with the tribunes who are growing daily more powerful.

Explanation: Marcius says that the people have chosen a tribune who has the daring to use the word "shall" in an authoritative manner. In using the word "shall" in that tone, the tribune wishes to assert the power of the people against the will of the senate. The senate consists of noble patricians and the senate is a tribunal more dignified than the sternest that Greece ever had. Marcius swears by Jupiter and says that the insolent attitude of the tribunes degrades the consuls. Marcius's heart feels much distressed to find that the tribunes have acquired so much power. It is clear that there are now two authorities in Rome, neither of which can subdue the other. With the patricians and the commoners thus at war, the forces of confusion will overpower both sides and will use both of them as instruments of each other's destruction.

(*Graver bench*—more dignified tribunal. *Jove*—the chief god; Jupiter. *'Twixt*—betwixt; between).

42. *This double worship,*
Where one part does disdain with cause, the other
Insult without all reason; where gentry, title, wisdom,
Cannot conclude but by the yea and no
Of general ignorance,—it must omit
Real necessities, and give way the while
To unstable slightness: purpose so barr'd, it follows,
Nothing is done to purpose.

(*Act III, sc. i, lines 142 ff.*)

Context : These lines are part of a speech by Marcius in the play *Coriolanus.* Marcius feels much provoked by the authoritative manner in which the tribunes have spoken. He therefore urges the patricians to stiffen and to take steps to prevent the tribunes from taking over the power of the patricians. There cannot and should not be two authorities in Rome, he says.

Explanation : Power, says Marcius, seems to be divided between the patricians and the tribunes. This divided power must necessarily ignore important matters and be content, for the time being, with weaknes and instability in the state. Under these circumstances, the patricians are rightly scornful, while the tribunes are insolent without reason. Under these conditions, the wise and high-born patricians can enforce no decision without the consent of the commoners. As the patricians are unable to implement their decisions, it follows that nothing can be done to cope with the problem.

(*Double worship*—divided authority. *Disdain*—scorn. *Barr'd—obstructed*).

43. *Therefore, beseech you,*
You that will be less fearful than discreet,
That love the fundamental part of state
More than you doubt the change on't, that prefer
A noble life before a long, and wish
To jump a body with a dangerous physic
That's sure of death without it, at once pluck out
The multitudinous tongue.

(*Act III, sc. i, lines 149 ff.*)

Context : These lines are part of a speech by Marcius to the patricians in the play *Coriolanus.* Marcius feels much provoked by the authoritative manner in which the tribunes have spoken. He therefore urges the patricians to stiffen and to take steps to prevent the tribunes from taking over the power of the patricians. There cannot and should not be two authorities in Rome, he says.

Explanation : Marcius says that there are among the patricians some who consider courage to be a better policy than weak cautiousness. There are some who more highly value the fundamental principles of the welfare of the state than

fear any particular change necessary to its stability. There are some who prefer a noble life to a long life and are therefore ready to run a risk by administering a dangerous medicine to the state which is likely to perish without that medicine. Marcius appeals to patricians of these categories and with these views to show courage and to silence the voice of the mob. He urges them to take a firm line in dealing with the people and the tribunes.

(*Beseech*—appeal to. *Discreet*—cautious. *To jump*—to expose ; to risk. *Physic*—medicine).

44. *Thou wretch, despite o'er whelm thee !*
What should the people do with these bald tribunes ?
On whom depending, their obedience fails,
To the greater bench : in a rebellion,
When what's not meet, but what must be, was law,
Then were they chosen : in a better hour,
Let what is meet be said it must be meet,
And throw their power i' the dust.

(*Act III, sc. i lines 164 ff.*)

Context : These lines are a speech by Marcius in the play *Coriolanus*. Marcius has been stung to fury by the provocative words used by the tribunes about him. Sicinius calls him a traitor, whereupon Marcius makes the speech quoted here.

Explanation : Marcius calls Sicinius a wretched fellow fit for overwhelming contempt and hatred. People cannot obtain any good from these old and senseless tribunes, says Marcius. Trusting to these fellows, the people fail to obey those higher in authority and greater in dignity. Marcius points out that these fellows were chosen as tribunes in a state of rebellion when necessity, not the fitness of things, determined the situation. Now the situation having improved, only what is fit and proper should be applied to the circumstances of the time, and the power of the tribunes shoud be completely nullified.

(*Despite*—contempt and hatred. *Bald*—old and foolish. *The greater bench*—those occupying higher positions ; the senators.)

45. *But now 'tis odds beyond arithmetic ;*
And manhood is call'd foolery, when it stands

Against a falling fabric. Will you hence,
Before the tag return ? whose rag doth rend
Like interrupted waters and o'erbear
What they are used to bear.

(*Act III, sc. i, lines 245 ff.*)

Context : These lines are a speech by Cominius to the patricians in the play *Coriolanus*. The citizens have been instigated by the tribunes against Marcius. Marcius has lost his temper and has used very harsh words for the tribunes and for the citizens. Marcius even drew his sword to fight the crowd. Cominius here speaks words of good counsel.

Explanation : Cominius says that the forces against the patricians are now beyond all calculation and that the patricians should now use tact rather than the force of arms. Courage becomes mere foolhardiness when a man tries to oppose his strength to that of a building which is about to fall and which will surely crush him in its fall. Cominius asks Marcius to withdraw from the scene before the mob returns. The fury of the mob, he says, is as violent as the fury of waters the course of which has been dammed up and which sweeps away to destruction what those waters normally used to carry their surface.

(*Odds*—unfavourable factors ; opposing forces. ***Mahood***—manly courage. ***Fabric***—structure ; building. ***Tag***—crowd ; mob. ***Rend***—destroy. ***O'erbear***—sweep away).

46. *O, he's a limb that has but a disease ;*
Mortal, to cut it off ; to cure it, easy.
What has he done to Rome that's worthy death ?
Killing our enemies, the blood he hath lost,
Which, I dare vouch, is more than that he hath
By many an ounce-he dropp'd it for his country.
And what is left, to lose it by his country,
Were to us all, that do't and suffer it,
A brand to the end o' the world.

(*Act III, sc. i, lines 297 ff*).

Context—These lines are a speech by Menenius to Sicinius in the play *Coriolanus*. Marcius has insulted the tribunes and the people. The people are furious and the tribunes have pronounced the sentence of death upon him for being a traitor. Sicinius says that Marcius is a disease

that must be cut away, whereupon Menenius speaks the words quoted here.

Explanation : Menenius says that it is only one of the limbs of Marcius that is diseased. To cut off that limb would be fatal, while it is easy to cure the limb of its disease. Menenius asks what injury Marcius has done to deserve the punishment of death. Marcius fought against the enemies of Rome and lost more of his blood in the fighting that the quantity of blood left in his body. If the blood that is left in his body were now to be shed by his own country, it would be a mark of disgrace for all, for those who do the deed and for those who allow it to be done. To kill Marcius would be a permanent disgrace and dishonour for the Romans.

(*Mortal*—fatal. *Vouch*—affirm ; bear testimony to. *Brand*—mark of disgrace).

47. *I muse my mother*
Does not approve me further, who was wont
To call them woollen vassals, things created
To buy and sell with groats, to show bare heads
In congregations, to yawn, be still and wonder,
When one but of my ordinance stood up
To speak of peace or war.

(*Act III, sc. ii, lines 8 ff.*)

Context : These lines are a speech by Marcius to a group of patricians in the play *Coriolanus*. Marcius is trying to justify the way in which he has treated the people and their tribunes. He cannot understand why even his own mother has not approved of his conduct.

Explanation : Marcius says that his mother used herself to call the people coarse-clad slaves, fellows created to carry on their petty trades, to stand with their heads uncovered in public assemblies, to yawn lazily, to be still and to be filled with wonder when any one of rank or status stood up to speak on the subject of peace or war. If Volumnia has always been expressing such a low opinion about the commoners, why should she now not approve Marcius's contemptuous treatment of them. From his mother at least, Marcius should expect support.

(*Muse*—reflect wonderingly. *Wont*—accustomed. *Woollen*

—coarse-clad. *Vassals*—slaves. *Groats*—small coins. *Congregations*—assemblies. *Ordinance*—rank or status.)

48. *You might have been enough the man you are*
With striving less to be so : lesser had been
The thwartings of your dispositions, if
You had not show'd them how ye were disposed
Ere they lack'd power to cross you.

(*Act III, sc. ii, lines 20 ff.*)

Context : These lines are a speech by Volumnia to her son, Marcius, in the play *Coriolanus*. Volumnia disapproves of the harsh, insulting manner in which Marcius has spoken to the citizens and to the tribunes.

Explanation : Volumnia says that Marcius should not have been so hasty in asserting himself. Marcius could have shown himself in a true light even if he had been less assertive and less dominating. His inclinations would have met with less opposition if he had not revealed his lack of self-control till the people had been completely subdued by him. Volumnia means to say that Marcius should have shown more patience with the citizens till such time as he grew powerful enough to have his own way. He should have waited for his power to be fully established before revealing his irritable nature and his arrogance to the people.

(*Thwartings*—opposition. *Dispositions*—inclinations. *Ere*—before. *Cross*—oppose).

49. *You are too absolute ;*
Though therein you can never be too noble,
But when extremeties speak. I have heard you say,
Honour and policy, like unsever'd friends,
I' the war do grow together : grant that, and tell me,
In peace what each of them by the other lose,
That they combine not there.

(*Act III, sc. ii, lines 41 ff.*)

Context : These lines are a speech by Volumnia to her son, Marcius, in the play *Coriolanus*. Volumnia disapproves of the insulting manner in which Marcius has spoken to the crowd and to the tribunes. It is her view that he should have

kept his pride and his arrogance in check till he had become powerful enough.

Explanation : Volumnia says that Marcius has spoken in too firm and self-assertive a manner. It is true that the more self-assertive he is, the more noble he will show himself to be ; yet when the situation becomes critical, he must diminish his self-assertiveness. She reminds him of the view he used to express in the past, namely, that during times of war nobleness should be mixed with diplomacy and that these two (nobleness and diplomacy) flourish together like inseparable friends. If he admits that, then these two can be mixed together during times of peace also. Let him, therefore, follow the course dictated by diplomacy in dealing with the people. Let him not exclude diplomacy from his course of action.

(*Absolute*—self-assertive ; firm. *Extremities*—critical circumstances. *Policy*—diplomacy. *Unsever'd*—inseparable).

50. *Because that now it lies you on to speak*
To the people ; not by your own instruction,
Nor by the matter which your heart prompts you,
But with such words that are but roted in
Your tongue, though but bastards and syllables
Of no allowance to your bosom's truth.
Now, this no more dishonours you at all
Than to take in a town with gentle words,
Which else would put you to your fortune and
The hazard of much blood.

(*Act III, sc. ii, lines 54 ff.*)

Context : These lines are part of a speech by Volumnia to her son, Marcius, in the play *Coriolanus*. Volumnia urges her son to follow a diplomatic procedure in dealing with the citizens and the tribunes. It is not desirable, she says, to be outspoken with the people at this stage.

Explanation : Volumnia advises her son to speak to the people, not according to his real beliefs or according to the real dictates of his heart, but according to what the situation demands. He should speak to the people in a manner to pacify the people, even though this course may not be agreeable to him and may not be acceptable to his real feelings. Such a course will not be dishonourable to him though there

will be an element of policy or diplomacy in it. After all, there is nothing dishonourable in capturing a town with gentle words instead of through blood-shed. In the same way, there will be no loss of self-respect if he speaks to the people gently in order to win them. Let him speak gentle words as if he has memorized those words for delivery before the people, even if these words do not come directly from his heart. In other words, let him produce the impression of gentleness even if he does not feel a real desire to be gentle to the people.

(*Roted in your tongue*—learnt by rote; committed to memory without there being any sincerity. *Hazard*—risk).

51. *I would dissemble with my nature where*
My fortunes and my friends at stake required
I should do so in honour: I am in this,
Your wife, your son, these senators, the nobles;
And you will rather show our general louts
How you can frown than spend a fawn upon 'm,
For the inheritance of their loves and safeguard
Of what that want might ruin.

(*Act III, sc. ii, lines 63 ff.*)

Context: These lines are part of a speech by Volumnia to her son, Marcius, in the play *Coriolanus*. Volumnia urges her son to speak gently to the crowd, even if that gentleness is assumed and not real.

Explanation: Volumnia says that she would not mind putting on a false pose in a situation in which she and her friends were threatened with some danger and in which the danger could be averted by putting on a false pose. In this matter, she says, Marcius should pay heed to her as she is speaking to him not only on her own behalf but on behalf of his wife, his son, and the noble senators. Marcius should try to win the people's love because without their love he will only meet his ruin. He should flatter the people, clownish though they are, instead of persisting in scolding them or in frowning at them in anger.

(*Dissemble*—put on a false pose. *Louts*—clowns. *Spend a fawn upon 'em*—flatter them. *Inheritance*—possession).

52. *Well, I must do't :*
Away, my disposition, and possess me
Some woman's spirit ! my throat of war be turn'd,
Which quired with my drum, into a pipe
Small as an eunuch's, or the virgin voice
That babies lulls asleep ! the smiles of knaves
Tent in my cheeks, and schoolboys' tears take up
The glasses of my sight ! a beggar's tongue
Make motion through my lids, and my arm'd knees,
Who bow'd but in my stirrup, bend like his
That hath received an alms !

(*Act III, sc. ii, lines 112 ff.*)

Context : These lines are a speech by Marcius to his mother and the patricians. His mother has pressed him hard to speak gently to the citizens and to keep his pride in check. Marcius would not like to yield to the citizens and in this speech he expresses his sense of shame in having to yield to them.

Explanation : Marcius, under the pressure of his mother, agrees to speak gently to the commoners. In doing so, he has to bid farewell to his own spirit and be possessed by a woman's spirit. His voice has always uttered words of command in battle and has always sounded in harmony with the drums of battle. But now his voice will have to be converted into the shrill sound of a eunuch or the maidenly voice which soothes children to sleep. He must now wear the hypocritical smile of rogues on his cheeks and he must bring tears of school-boys into his eyes. The voice of a beggar must now sound through his lips. And his knees which formerly bent only in his stirrup must now bend like that of a beggar who has received charity. In short, to speak gently to the people is to Marcius a great humiliation and degradation.

(*Disposition*—nature ; inclinations. *Quired with*—was in harmony with. *Eunuch*—one who is neither man nor woman. *Tent*—dwell).

53. *At thy choice, then :*
To beg of thee, it is my more dishonour
Than thou of them. Come all to ruin ; let

Thy mother rather feel thy pride than fear
Thy dangerous stoutness, for I mock at death
With as big heart as thou. Do as thou list.
Thy valiantness was mine, thou suck'dst it from me,
But owe thy pride thyself.

(*Act III, sc. ii, lines 124 ff.*)

Context : These lines are a speech by Volumnia to her son, Marcius, in the play *Coriolanus*. Volumnia has been urging her son to speak gently to the people and thus to gain the ground he has lost. Marcius, however, finds it against the grain to speak gently to the commoners whom he hates. Volumnia becomes annoyed with Marcius and makes this speech in anger.

Explanation : Volumnia angrily says that her son may do as he pleases. She thinks it a greater dishonour for herself to make appeals to him than for him to make appeals to the people. In view of his obstinacy, she would not care if everything comes to ruin. She would rather bend beneath his obstinate pride than stoop to any fears of the danger which will result from his pride. She says that she can defy death with as fearless a heart as he. He may do what he pleases. But he should know that his valour was derived from her when he sucked it with the milk from her breast, while his pride is all his own and has nothing to do with her.

(*Stoutnees.*—pride ; obstinacy. *Big heart*—fearless heart. *List*—listen. *Valiantness*—valour).

54. *Put him to choler straight : he hath been used*
Ever to conquer, and to have his worth
Of contradiction : being once chafed, he cannot
Be rein'd again to temperance ; then he speaks
What's in his heart ; and that is there which looks
With us to break his neck.

(*Act III, sc. iii, lines 26 ff.*)

Context : These words are a speech by Brutus to his fellow-tribune, Sicinius. Marcius has agreed to explain his conduct to the citizens and to speak to them gently. The tribunes, fearing that Marcius might win over the citizens, decide to provoke him to anger before he can create a favourable effect upon the citizens.

Explanation : Brutus suggests that they must lose no time in stirring up Marcius's anger. He says that Marcius has been accustomed always to conquer and has been allowed always to contradict himself as much as he pleased. When once Marcius is angered, he cannot be restrained and he cannot then adopt a tone of moderation. On such occasions, he utters what he feels ; and that, combined with the efforts of the tribunes, will most probably bring about the ruin of Marcius. Brutus, in other words, suggests that the best way of preventing Marcius from winning the love of the people is to arouse his anger so that he may again speak arrogantly to the people as he did before.

Choler—anger. *Chafed*—annoyed. *Reined*—brought under control. *Temperance*—moderation).

53. *Nay, mother,*
Where is your ancient courage ? you were used
To say extremity was the trier of spirits ;
That common chances common men could bear ;
That when the sea was calm all boats alike
Show'd mastership in floating ; fortune's blows,
When most struck home, being gentle wounded, craves
A noble cunning : you were used to load me
With precepts that would make invincible
The heart that conn'd them.

(*Act IV, sc. i lines 3 ff.*)

Context : These lines are part of a speech by Marcius at the time of his leaving Rome in the play *Coriolanus*. Marcius has been banished, and his mother is deeply distressed. Marcius speaks words of comfort to his mother.

Explanation : Marcius asks his mother to show the courage which she has always shown in the past. He reminds her of the words of good counsel she herself used to speak. She used to say that the most evil circumstances were a test of human courage ; that common happenings could be endured by the common people ; that, when the weather over the sea was calm, all boats could keep afloat ; that, when the blows of misfortune strike human beings with the most deadly force, then to bear the wounds with calmness demands the exercise of the noblest wisdom. Marcius reminds his mother of the numerous wise sayings and proverbs with which she used to inspire him and which could harden and strengthen the heart that learnt them.

(*Extremity*—misfortune. *Trier*—test. *Craves*—demands ; requires. *Cunning*—skill ; knowledge. *Precepts*—sayings ; proverbs. *Conn'd*—learnt).

56. *Nay, mother,*
Resume that spirit, when you were wont to say,
If you had been the wife of Hercules
Six of his labours you'ld have done, and saved
Your husband so much sweat.

(*Act IV, sc. i, lines 15 ff.*)

Context : These lines are part of a speech by Marcius at the time of his leaving Rome in the play *Coriolanus*. Marcius has been banished, and his mother is deeply distressed. Marcius speaks words of comfort to his mother.

Explanation : Marcius asks his mother to show the courage which she has always shown in the past. He reminds her of the inspiring manner in which she used to speak in the past in order to infuse courage into those who heard her. He reminds her of the bravery she claimed to possess when she used to say that, if she were the wife of Hercules, she would have accomplished at least six of the twelve labours of Hercules in order to relieve her husband of at least half of his tasks.

(*Wont*—used to. *Hercules*—an ancient hero who showed his superhuman courage and strength by performing twelve labours which were almost impossible for others to perform. These labours included the killing of a monster, the murder of a dangerous water-snake, and the cleaning of the Augean stables).

57. *My mother, you wot well*
My hazards still have been your solace : and
Believe't not lightly—though I go alone,
Like to a lonely dragon, that his fen
Makes fear'd and talk'd of more than seen—your son
Will or exceed to common or be caught
With cautelous baits and practice.

(*Act IV, sc. i lines 27 ff.*)

Context : These lines are part of a speech by Marcius to his mother in the play *Coriolanus*. Volumnia, the mother, feels deeply distressed at the banishment of Marcius, and is almost

tearful when Marcius is leaving Rome. Marcius speaks words of consolation and comfort to his mother.

Explanation : Marcius reminds his mother that the dangers he has faced in the past have always been a source of comfort and pride to her. Marcius says that, during his banishment, he will be like a lonely dragon who is more feared and talked about because he lives in hiding in some marshy retreat than he would be if he were to show himself frequently in the open. Marcius then assures his mother that during his banishment he will prove himself something more than an ordinary man, unless he falls a victim to the schemes and plots of cunning persons.

(*Wot*—know. *Hazards*—dangers. *Solace*—comfort. *Fen*—marshy place. *Cautelous*—cunning. *Practice*—plot).

58.¶*Anger's my meat ; I sup upon myself,*
And do shall starve with feeding, Come let's go
Leave this faint puling, and lament as I do,
In anger, Juno-like. Come, come, come.

(*Act. IV, sc. iii lines, 50. ff*)

Context : These lines are a speech by Volumnia partly to Menenius and partly to Virgilia in the play *Coriolanus*. Volumnia is feeling terribly distressed by the banishment of Marcius. Virgilia is moaning and crying at the departure of her husband from Rome. Menenius asks Volumnia if she and Virgilia would care to have their supper with him. Volumnia here gives her reply.

Explanation : Volumnia says that she needs no supper. Her anger will serve her as her food. In other words, she will feed herself with her anger. Thus no food is needed from outside. The anger in her heart will be her food. But food of this kind cannot nourish the body, and the body will starve. Therefore she will starve even though she will be getting food (in the form of the anger in her heart.) Then she turns to Virgilia and scolds her for her weak lamentations and her helpless, despairing groans. She asks Virgilia to express her grief in the form of anger. Volumnia says that her own grief is being expressed in anger in the same way as the grief of Juno (the proud wife of Jupiter) is expressed. Volumnia disapproves of Virgilia's feeble, childish complaining, and urges her to express

her sorrow in a furious, violent manner which is the manner of Juno.

(*Sup*—feed. *Puling*—childish complaining. *Juno-like*—in the manner of Juno. Juno is the proud and haughty wife of Jupiter, the chief god.)

59. *O world, thy slippery turns ! Friends now fast sworn,*
Whose double bosoms seem to wear one heart,
Whose hours, whose bed, whose meal, and exercise,
Are still together, who twin, as 'twere, in love
Unseparable, shall within this hour,
On a dissension of a doit, break out
To bitterest enmity, so, fellest foes,
Whose passions and whose plots have broke their sleep
To take the one the other, by some chance,
Some trick not worth an egg, shall grow dear friends
And interjoin their issues.

(*Act IV, sc. iv, lines 12 ff.*)

Context : These lines are a speech by Marcius in the play *Coriolanus*. Marcius here speaks to himself. The speech is thus a "soliloquy". Marcius has decided to make up his quarrel with Aufidius and to form an alliance with him against Rome.

Explanation : Marcius here reflects on how friendships may turn into enmities and vice versa. Marcius says that human beings quickly and suddenly pass from one condition to another. He first takes the case of friends who are bound to each other by the firmest pledges, who seem to carry a single heart in two different bosoms, who spend all their time together, go to bed together, take their meals together, and take their exercise together, who seem to be twins in love, and who are inseparable. Such friends may become the bitterest enemies of each other over a difference of the smallest nature. In the same way, the fiercest enemies, whose sleep during nights has been broken by the fury of their anger and by their plots to destroy each other, may become dear friends because of some chance, or some slight accident ; they may become such dear friends as to wish for intermarriages between their families.

(*Slippery turns*—sudden changes. *Dissension of a doit*—dispute over a small matter. *Fellest*—cruelest. *Not worth an egg*-small ; worthless ; trivial. *Issues*—children).

60. *A good memory,*
And witness of the malice and displeasure
Which thou shouldst bear me : only that name remains ;
The cruelty and envy of the people,
Permitted by our dastard nobles, who
Have all forsook me, hath devour'd the rest ;
And suffer'd me by the voice of slaves to be
Whoop'd out of Rome.

(*Act IV, sc. v, lines 74 ff*).

Context : These lines are part of a speech by Marcius to Aufidius in the play *Coriolanus*. Marcius, after his banishment from Rome, goes to Antium and gets into touch with Aufidius in order to make up with the latter and to form an alliance with the latter for the destruction of Rome. In the lines quoted here, he tells Aufidius how he has been treated by the Romans.

Explanation : Marcius says that he is now left with only his title "Coriolanus", and has lost everything else. This title, he says, is a good memorial which should serve to remind Aufidius of the ill-will and displeasure which Aufidius should feel towards Marcius. The people have taken away everything else from him and have thus shown their hatred and cruelty towards him. The cowardly nobles have deserted him and have allowed the people to drive him out of Rome with shouts of hatred and contempt. With such words, Marcius seeks sympathy and support from Aufidius.

(*Envy*—ill-will. *Dastard*—cowardly. *Suffered*—allowed. *Whooped out*—driven out with shouts of contempt).

61. *Then if thou hast*
A heart of wreak in thee, that wilt revenge
Thine own particular wrongs and stop those maims
Of shame seen through thy country, speed thee straight
And make my misery serve thy turn : so use it
That my revengeful services may prove
As benefits to thee, for I will fight
Against my canker'd country with the spleen
Of all the under fiends.

(*Act IV, sc. v, lines 87 ff*).

Context : These lines are part of a speech by Marcius to Aufidius in the play *Coriolanus*. Marcius, after his banishment from Rome, goes to Antium and gets into touch with Aufidius in order to make up with the latter and to form an alliance with the latter for the destruction of Rome.

Explanation : In the lines quoted here, Marcius offers his fullest cooperation to Aufidius in case Aufidius seeks his revenge upon the Romans for the wrongs and the losses Aufidius has suffered at the hands of the Romans. Marcius says that Aufidius can now convert Marcius's misfortune into an opportunity for the Volscians to satisfy their spirit of revenge. Marcius expresses his determination to fight against the spiteful and poisonous Rome with all the anger of the fiends of hell. Marcius's proposed revengeful action can prove beneficial to **Aufidius** and to the Volscians.

(*Wreak*—revenge. *Canaer'd*—poisonous ; spiteful. *Spleen*—wrath ; anger).

62. Let me twine
Mine arms about thy body, where against
My grained ash an hundred times hath broke,
And scarr'd the moon with splinters : here I clip
The anvil of my sword, and do contest
As hotly and as nobly with thy love
As ever in ambitious strength I did
Contend against thy valour.

(*Act IV, sc. v, lines 109 ff.*)

Context : These lines are part of a speech by Aufidius to Marcius in the play *Coriolanus*. Marcius, after his banishment from Rome, goes to Antium, gets into touch with Aufidius, and offers his services to Aufidius for the destruction of Rome. Aufidius gladly accepts the offer.

Explanation : Aufidius would like to take his former enemy in an affectionate embrace. He recalls how the hard-grained staff of his lance has in the past struck vainly against Marcius's body. Instead of his lance proving fatal to Marcius the lance itself was shattered into pieces which flew up and hit the moon. Marcius's body was to Aufidius's sword what the anvil is to the iron that is hammered and shaped on it. Aufidius now embraces the unconquerable body of Marcius. Aufidiu

promises to strive to win Marciu's love ; and in striving to do so he promises to use as much warmth and nobility as he previously showed in his ambition and in his knowledge of his strength against Marcius's bravery in war.

(*Grained*—hard-grained. *Ash*—handle of a lance. *Splinters*—pieces ; fragments. *Clip*—embrace. *Valour.*—bravery)

63. *Know thou first,*
I loved the maid I married ; never man
Sigh'd truer breath ; but that I see thee here,
Thou noble thing ; more dances my rapt heart
Than when I first my wedded mistress saw
Bestride my threshold. (*Act IV sc.v, lines 116 ff.*)

Context : These lines are taken from a speech of Aufidius to Marcius in the play *Coriolanus*. Marcius, after his banishment from Rome, goes to Antium, gets into touch with Aufidius, and offers his services to Aufidius for the destruction of Rome. Aufidius gladly accepts this offer and expresses his great joy at the alliance.

Explanation : Aufidius says that he is more thrilled with joy on this occasion than he was on the day of his marriage. Aufidius tells Marcius that he loved the girl whom he married and that nobody has ever poured forth more sincerely the sighs of love than he did. And yet he says that his heart is more enraptured to meet Marcius than it was when he first saw his wedded wife step over his threshold to enter his home.

(*Rapt*—enraptured ; joyful. *Bestride*—step over).

64. *Why, then we shall have a stirring world again. This peace is nothing, but to rust iron, increase tailors, and breed balled-makers.* (*Act IV, sc. vi, lines 225-227*).

Context : These lines are spoken by the Second Servant of Aufidius in the play *Coriolanus*. The Second Servant, having learnt that the Volscians will march against Rome on the following day, expresses his liking for war and his dislike for peace.

Explanation : The Second Servant says that the war is a period of excitement and vigorous action. The time of peace is very dull and tedious. During peace, swords grow rusty ; the number of tailors increases because men get more time to

pay attention to their clothes ; and many people become ballad-writers for want of a better occupation. Peace is thus undesirable.

(*Ballad-makers*—writers of ballads ; story-writers. A ballad is a poem that tells a story).

65. Let me have war, say I ; it exceeds peace as far as day does night ; t's spritely, waking, audible, and full of vent. Peace is a very apoplexy, lethargy ; deaf, sleepy, insensible. (*Act IV, sc. vi lines 228 ff.*)

Context : These lines are spoken by the First Servant of Aufidius in the play *Coriolanus.* Having heard from the Third Servant that war between Volscians and Romans is about to start once more, the Second Servant declares himself against peace and in favour of war, whereupon the First Servant too expresses his liking for war and his dislike for peace.

Explanation : The First Servent says that war is as superior to peace as day is to night. War, according to him, means courage and spirit ; it means wakefulness and vigilance ; it means a quickened hearing ; and it provides outlets for energy. The activity and excitement of war are exhilarating. Peace, on the contrary, means complete and utter inactivity and idleness. Peace means laziness and has a flat, insipid taste. Peace deadens the hearing and makes people inert and sluggish.

(*Spritely*—full of spirit and courage. *Vent*—outlet (for energy). *Apoplexy*—paralysis ; immobility. *Mulled*—flat and insipid.)

66. He is their god : he leads them like a thing
Made by some other deity than nature,
That shapes man better ; and they follow him,
Against us brats, with no less confidence
Than boys pursuing summer butterflies,
Or butchers killing flies.

(*Act IV, sc. vi, lines 91 ff.*)

Context : These lines are a speech by Cominius who is talking to Menenius and the two tribunes in the play *Coriolanus*. Cominius has heard the news about the threatened invasion of Rome by the Volscians led by Marcius. Here Cominius describes his impressions of Marcius and Marcius's complete hold over the Volscian troops.

Explanation : Cominius says that Marcius is worshipped by the Volscian soldiers as their god. Marcius leads the Volscians like a person created not by nature but some higher, supernatural power who can cast human beings in a superior mould. The Volscians follow Marcius to attack the Romans who, compared with them are but children. Cominius goes on to say that the Volscians follow Marcius with as much confidence as boys have when they chase summer butterflies or as butchers have while killing flies.

(*Deity*—god. *That shapes man better*—that moulds human beings in a superior shape. *Brats*—children).

67. I think he'll be to Rome
As is the osprey to the fish, who takes it
By sovereignty of nature. First he was
A noble servant to them ; but he could not
Carry his honours even : whether 'twas pride,
Which out of daily fortune ever taints
The happy man ; whether defect of judgment,
To fail in the disposing of those chances
Which he was lord of ; or whether nature,
Not to be other than one thing, not moving
From the casque to the cushion, but commanding peace
Even with the same austerity and garb
As he controll'd the war ; but one of these
As he hath spices of them all, not all,
For I dare so far free him-made him fear'd,
So hated, and so banish'd : but he has a merit,
To choke it in the utterance.

(*Act IV, sc. vii, lines 33 ff.*)

Context : These lines are part of a speech by Aufidius who is talking to his Lieutenant in the play *Coriolanus*. Aufidius is feeling somewhat worried by the growing power of Marcius and here he gives expression to his feelings about Marcius.

Explanation : Aufidius says that Marcius will conquer Rome without any difficulty. Rome will be attracted towards Marcius just as a fish is atttracted towards the osprey which catches the fish by that powerful attraction which is given to the osprey by Nature. Aufidius then gives a brief account of the rise and fall of Marcius. First, Marcius was a high-placed public servant ; but he could not wear his honours with moderation. Whether it was pride which, arising

from constant good fortune, always afflicts the happy man ; whether it was a defect of judgment in failing to turn to good account those advantages which he possessed and enjoyed ; or whether it was his stubborn nature which was incapable of changing itself and which, so accustomed to war, could not adapt itself to peaceful matters, showing itself even during peace time in that stern manner of doing things which he had learnt from the discipline of war ; but one of these—because he has a touch of these faults though he has only a touch of each and not any one of them fully developed—made him fearful in the eyes of the people. As a result of his being fearful, he soon began to be hated and, as a consequence of that, was soon driven into exile ; but he has a greatness which makes the sentence of banishment seem as nothing.

(*Osprey*—the name of a bird which feeds on fish. *Taints*—infects ; afflicts. *Chances*—advantages. *Casque*—helmet (representing war). *Cushion*—civil administration. *Austerity*—stern manner. *Spices*—touches ; a little).

68. *So our virtues*
Lie in the interpretation of the time :
And power, unto itself most commendable,
Hath not a tomb so evident as a chair
To extol what it hath done.
One fire drives out one fire ; one nail, one nail ;
Rights by rights falter, strenghths by strength do fail.
(*Act. IV. sc. vii lines 49 ff*).

Context : These lines are part of a speech by Aufidius to a lieutenant in the play *Coriolanus*. Seeing the growing hold of Marcius over the Volscian soldiers, Aufidius becomes jealous and suspicious. He explains to the lieutenant the circumstances in which Marcius met his down-fall in Rome. In the lines quoted here, he draws a general conclusion from Marcius's down-fall.

Explanation : Aufidius says that the virtues of human beings depend on the way in which they are judged by other people. A powerful man, worthy of the highest praise in his own opinion, may not be praised after death by others as much as he was praised during his life-time by himself. (Or, a man in a high position, however much he may consider himself worthy

of praise, finds no surer burial place for his reputation than the chair from which he proclaims his own praise). Aufidius then says that one fire expels another fire, that one nail by its force pushes out another nail, that rights give way to other and better rights ; and that strength yields to greater strength. Aufidius means to say that, no matter how powerful Marcius becomes, it will be possible to oust him from power when the time comes.

(*Commendable*—worthy of praise. *Chair*—position of power and authority. *Extol*—praise highly).

69. *The veins unfill'd, our blood is cold, and then*
We pout upon the morning, are unapt
To give or to forgive ; but when we have stuff'd
These pipes and these conveyances of our blood
With wine and feeding, we have suppler souls
Than in our priest-like fasts : therefore I'll watch him
Till he be dieted to my request,
And then I'll set upon him.

(*Act V, sc. i, lines 51 ff.*)

Context : These lines are a speech by Menenius to the tribunes in the play *Coriolanus*. Menenius tries to explain why Marcius rejected Cominius's request on behalf of Rome. Perhaps, when the request was made, Marcius had not yet dined.

Explanation : Menenius says that, when we have not yet eaten our meals, our blood is cold so that we look at everything in a fretful mood and are disinclined to give or to forgive. When, however, we have filled our body with food and wine, we have less stubborn hearts than when we have starved ourselves like priests by observing fasts. Menenius means that a man is in a more generous mood when he has taken a hearty meal than when he is hungry. Menenius, accordingly, says that he will make his request to Marcius only after making sure that Marcius has already taken his dinner and is thus in a responsive mood.

(*Stuffed*—filled. *Suppler souls*—more lenient hearts. *Dieted to my request*—inclined to listen to my request because of having already taken his dinner.)

70. *I have been*
The book of his good acts, whence men have read
His fame unparallel'd haply amplified ;
For I have ever magnified my friends,
Of whom he's chief, will all the size that verity
Would without lapsing suffer : nay, sometimes,
Like to a bowl upon a subtle ground,
I have tumbled past the throw ; and in his praise
Have almost stamp'd the leasing :

(*Act V, sc. ii, lines 14 ff.*)

Context : These lines are a speech by Menenius to the Volscian sentinels in the play *Coriolanus*. Menenius has been refused admittance to Marcius's tent, whereupon Menenius informs the sentinels about his intimate relations with Marcius.

Explanation : Menenius says that he has been like a record of Marcius's brave deeds, a record from which men have received information of Marcius's unequalled fame, though possibly in an exaggerated form. Menenius says that Marcius is his chief friend and that he has always exaggerated the qualities of his friends so far as was possible without becoming actually guilty of falsehood. Sometimes, says Menenius, he has, in praising his friends, even shot beyond the mark like a bowl rolling over slippery and deceptive ground. Menenius adds that, in praising Marcius, he has almost been giving to untruth the stamp of truth.

(*Book of his good acts*—record of his brave deeds. *Haply*—possibly. *Amplified*—exaggerated. *Without lapsing*—without lapsing into falsehood. *Subtle ground*—slippery or deceptive ground. *Stamp'd the leasing*—given the stamp of truth to untruth).

71. *I neither care for the world nor your general : for such things as you, I can scarce think there's any, ye're so slight. He that hath a will to die by himself fears it not from another : let your general do his worst. For you, be that you are, long ; and your misery increase with your age !*

(*Act V, sc. ii, lines 100 ff.*)

Context : These lines are a speech by Menenius to the Volscian sentinels in the play *Coriolanus*. Menenius has received a heavy blow to his heart by the coldness of Marcius when

Menenius appealed to Marcius for mercy to Rome. Here Menenius expresses the state of his mind.

Explanation : Menenius says that he now cares neither for Marcius nor for the world in general. So far as the sentinels are concerned, they are so mean and insignificant as not to exist in Menenius's eyes. Menenius expresses his defiance of Marcius and of death. Let Marcius do the worst he can to Rome and to Menenius. As for the sentinels, Menenius wishes them a long life of servitude and wishes their misery to increase with their years.

72. *And to poor we*
Thine enmity's most capital : thou barr'st us
Our prayers to the gods, which is a comfort
That all but we enjoy ; for how can we,
Alas, how can we for our country pray,
Whereto we are bound, together with thy victory,
Whereto we are bound ? alack, or we must lose
The country, our dear nurse, or else thy person,
Our comfort in the country. (*Act V, sc. iii, lines 103 ff.*)

Context : These lines are part of a speech by Volumnia to her son, Marcius, in the play *Coriolanus*. Marcius has threatened Rome with destruction, and Volumnia pleads with her son for mercy. In these lines Volumnia describes the awkward situation in which she and Marcius's wife find themselves.

Explanation : Volumnia says that Marcius's enmity to Rome is most destructive to her, to Virgilia, and to Marcius's son, wretched as they all feel. It is not possible for them even to find comfort by praying to the gods. They cannot pray for a victory for their country, to do which they are duty bound. And they cannot pray for his (Marcius's) victory, to do which they are equally bound (being his nearest relatives). If they pray for a victory for their country, they should be prepared to lose him who has been a source of comfort to them. If they pray for a victory for him , they should be prepared for the enslavement of their country on the soil of which they have been brought up. Thus they are faced with a dilemma.

(*Capital*—fatal ; destructive. *Thou barr'st*—you prevent. *Alack*—alas.)

73. *We must find*
An evident calamity, though we had
Our wish, which side should win : for either thou
Must, as a foreign recreant, be led
With manacles through our streets, or else
Triumphantly tread on thy country's ruin,
And bear the palm for having bravely shed
Thy wife and children's blood.

(*Act V, sc. iii, lines 111 ff.*)

Context : These lines are a part of a speech by Volumnia to her son, Marcius, in the play *Coriolanus*. Marcius has threatened Rome with destruction. Volumnia pleads with him for mercy to Rome. She states the dilemma with which she and Marcius's wife are faced. Volumnia and Virgilia can pray neither for a victory to Rome nor for a victory to Marcius.

Explanation : Whether Volumnia and Virgilia pray for a victory to Rome or for a victory to Marcius, they must obviously be prepared to face a calamity. If Rome wins, Marcius, who is no longer a Roman, having deserted his country, must be led in chains and fetters through the streets of Rome. If Marcius wins, he will triumphantly trample upon the conquered country and win the reward for having bravely shed the blood of his wife and children. Both the alternatives are equally dreadful and destructive to Virgilia and Volumnia.

(*Recreant*—deserter. *Manacles*—fetters. *Tread on*—trample upon. *Bear the palm*—win the reward).

74. *For myself, son,*
I purpose not to wait on fortune till
These wars determine : if I cannot persuade thee
Rather to show a noble grace to both parts
Than seek the end of one, thou shalt no sooner
March to assault thy country than to tread—
Trust to't, thou shalt not—on thy mother's womb
That brought thee to this world.

(*Act V, sc. iii, lines 118 ff.*)

Context: These lines are part of a speech by Volumnia to her son, Marcius, in the play *Coriolanus*. Volumnia is pleading with her son for mercy to Rome. She describes the dilemma

that she and Virgilia are faced with. In these lines she tells her son what view she will take of his action in destroying Rome.

Explanation : Volumnia urges her son to show a noble grace to both Romans and Volscians, and not to aim at the fulfilment of the desire of Volscians to destroy Rome. In case she cannot prevail upon her son, she proposes not to trust to her luck and not to wait till these wars come to an end. In that case, he will no sooner march to overrun his country than he shall have to trample upon his mother's womb which brought him forth into this world. Volumnia adds that she is perfectly in earnest in what she has said.

(*Determine*—come to an end. *Noble grace*—generosity and large-heartedness. *Assault*—attack. *Tread*—trample).

75. *There's no man in the world*
More bound to's mother ; yet here he lets me prate
Like one i' the stocks. Thou hast never in thy life
Show'd thy dear mother any courtesy,
When she, poor hen, fond of no second brood,
Has cluck'd thee to the wars, and safely home,
Loaded with honour.

(*Act V, sc. iii, lines 159 ff.*)

Context : These lines are taken from the play *Coriolanus* and are part of a speech by Volumnia to her son Marcius. Marcius has threatened to destroy Rome. Volumnia is trying to dissuade him from his destructive purpose and here she comlains of his indifference towards her appeals and arguments.

Explanation : Volumnia says that there is no man in this world who owes a deeper debt of gratitude to his mother than Marcius owes to Volumnia. Yet Marcius lets his mother talk idly like one sitting in the stocks and begging the passers-by for pity. Volumnia says that Marcius has never in his life shown any courtesy to his dear mother. So far as she is concerned, she gave all her love to him alone. She never felt a desire for other children, besides him. She used proudly to send him forth to the wars and as proudly to welcome him on his return home, covered with glory. It is a shame that he should be so ungrateful to his mother.

(*Bound to's mother*—under his mother's obligation ; indeb-

ted to his mother. *Brood*—children. *Loaden with honour*—covered with military glory).

76. *Say my request's unjust,*
And spurn me back : but if it be not so,
Thou art not honest : and the gods will plague thee,
That thou restrain'st from me the duty which
To a mother's part belongs. He turns away :
Down, ladies ; let us shame him with our knees.
(*Act V, sc. iii, lines 165 ff.*)

Context : These lines are taken from the play *Coriolanus* and are part of a speech by Volumnia to her son, Marcius. Marcius has threatened to destroy Rome. Volumnia is urging her son not to follow that destructive course of action. Finding him unresponsive, she speaks the words quoted here.

Explanation : Volumnia says that, if her son genuinely thinks her request to be unreasonable, he may by all means reject her and send her back unsatisfied. But if her request be reasonable, then he will be guilty of dishonesty in rejecting it. In that case, the gods will severely punish him for his failure to show that dutiful obedience which a son ought to show to his mother. Volumnia then finds her son turning away from her. Thereupon she asks the ladies, who have come with her, to kneel before Marcius and to make him feel ashamed of himself by this action.

(*Spurn*—reject. *Plague thee*—severely punish and torment you. *Restraint'st*—withhold ; keep back. *Shame him*—make him feel ashamed of himself).

77. *Come, let us go :*
This fellow had a Volscian to his mother ;
His wife is in Corioli and his child—
Like him by chance. Yet give us our dispatch :
I am hush'd until our city be afire,
And then I'll speak a little.
(*Act V, sc. iii, lines 178 ff*).

Context : These are the concluding lines of the long speech which Volumnia makes to her son, Marcius, in the play *Coriolanus*. Marcius has lent a deaf ear to all the arguments and appeals of his mother. Volumnia, thereupon, utters these harsh words to force him into submission.

Explanation :Volumnia says to her companions (Virgilia and Valeria) that there is no use talking to Marcius any more. They ought to leave him and they should return to Rome. Volumnia further says that Marcius's obstinacy is a proof that he is not her son. Marcius must have been born of a Volscian mother, because he has so firmly allied himself with the Volscian cause. Nor can such a man have a Roman lady as his wife. His wife, too must be some Volscian woman living in the city of Corioli. Even the child who resembles Marcius and who is believed to be his son cannot really be his son. The resemblance is a mere accident and no proof of any relationship between them. Volumnia then prepares to leave. She adds that she will remain silent till Marcius sets fire to Rome and then she will have something more to say.

(*Dispatch*—departure. *Afire*—on fire. *Hush'd*—forced to remain silent).

78. *The tartness of his face sours ripe grapes : when he walks, he moves like an engine, and the ground shrinks before his treading : he is able to pierce a corslet with his eyes ; talks like a knell, and his hum is a battery. He sits in his state, as a thing made for Alexander. What he bids be done is finished with his bidding. He wants nothing of a god but eternity and a heaven to throne in.* (*Act V, sc. iv, lines 17 ff.*)

Context : These lines are a speech by Menenius to Sicinius in the play *Coriolanus*. Menenius speaks bitterly of the change that has taken place in Marcius. Marcius has rejected the petition for mercy made first by Cominius and then by Menenius. Menenius feels much aggrieved with Marcius.

Explanation : Menenius says that Marcius's face wears such a sour look that even ripe grapes would turn sour in his presence. When Marcius walks, he moves like some mighty war-machine, and the ground seems to shrink as he treads upon it. Marcius is able to pierce a corslet with his sharp eyes; his voice is like the sound of a death-bell ; and when he clears his threat, it is like the firing of a cannon. Marcius sits in his exalted chair as though he were playing the role of Alexander, the Great. When Marcius gives an order for something to be done, his order is carried out as soon as it is given. He is a god

in everything except that he is not immortal and that he has no heaven in which he can be enthroned.

(*Tartness*—sourness. *Treading*—footsteps. *Corslet*—a leather-and-iron covering for the body. *Knell*—death-bell. *Made for*—made to represent. *Battery*—firing of cannon. *Eternity*—immortality).

79. *I raised him, and I pawn'd*
Mine honour for his truth : who being so heighten'd,
He water'd his new plants with dews of flattery,
Seducing so many friends ; and, to this end,
He bow'd his nature, never known before
But to be rough, unswayable and free.

(*Act V, sc. vi, lines 21 ff.*)

Context : These lines are a speech by Aufidius to his fellow-conspirators in the play *Coriolanus*. Aufidius here gives his reasons for turning against Marcius and deciding to murder him.

Explanation : Aufidius says that it was he who raised Marcius to a high status. He pledged his honour to convince the Volscian lords of Marcius's sincerity. Being raised to a high position, Marcius strengthened his newly gained sources of support with the nourishing power of flattery, thus luring many of Aufidius's friends to his side. In order to achieve this object, Marcius even humbled his nature which had always been known before as being rough and as being subject neither to any control nor to any restraints.

(*Pawn'd*—pledged. *Truth*—truthfulness, sincerity. *Heighten'd*—raised. *Bow'd his nature*—humbled his nature. *Unswayable*—not subject to any control).

80. *There was it,*
For which my sinews shall be stretch'd upon him.
At a few drops of women's rheum, which are
As cheap as lies, he sold the blood and labour
Of our great action : therefore shall be die,
And I'll renew me in his fall.

(*Act V, sc. vi, lines 46ff.*)

Context : These lines are a speech by Aufidius to his fellow-conspirators in the play *Coriolanus*. Aufidius complains that Marcius has proved ungrateful to him and has tried to

raise himself to a position above Aufidius. Aufidius here describes the pretext on which he proposes to murder Marcius.

Explanation : Aufidius says that Marcius shrank from the destruction of Rome just when Rome was about to fall to the Volscians. This is a matter in which Aufidius is determinded to use his utmost efforts to bring about Marcius's ruin. Women's tears are shed as easily as lies are told. And yet, seeing the tears of women, Marcius softened and agreed not to destroy or plunder Rome. By doing so, Marcius bartered away all the lives lost by the Volscians and all the labour the Volscians had undergone in thier great enterprise. Marcius must, therefore, be punished with death. In the downfall of Marcius, Aufidius will regain his former high position.

(*Sinews*—muscles of the body ; here, "efforts". *Rheum*—tears. *Renew me*—regain my previous position).

81. *Breaking his oath and resolution like*
A twist of rotten silk, never admitting
Counsel o' the war, but at his nurse's tears.
He whined and roar'd away your victory,
That pages blush'd at him and men of heart
Look'd wondering each at other.

(*Act V, sc, vi, lines 95 off.*)

Context : These lines are part of a speech by Aufidius to the Volscian lords in the play *Coriolanus*. Aufidius here openly accuses Marcius of treachery towards the Volscian lords. Aufidius says that a few tears shed by women softened Marcius who thereupon returned without conquering Rome.

Explanation : Aufidius says that Marcius broke his vow and his resolution as easily as one breaks a few threads of rotten silk twisted together. Marcius never paid heed to the advice of any one as to how the war should be managed. The moment his mother began to weep, Marcius began to whimper and then with much noise gave away the victory he had won. At this strange behaviour of Marcius, the mere boy-attendants felt ashamed of him, while brave men looked at one another in surprise.

(*Whined*—whimpered ; cried slowly in grief. *Pages*—boy-servants. *Men of heart*—brave men).

82. *Cut me to pieces, Volsces ; men and lads,*
Stain all your edges on me. "Boy !" false hound !
If you have writ your annals true, 'tis there,
That, like an eagle in a dove-cote, I
Flutter'd your Volscians in Corioli :
Alone I did it. "Boy !"

(*Act V, sc. vi, lines 110 ff.*)

Context : These lines are a speech by Marcius to the Volscians in the play *Coriolanus*. Marcius has been accused by Aufidius of treachery towards the Volscians. Marcius has also been addressed by Aufidius in an insulting manner as "boy." Marcius goes almost crazy with grief and anger.

Explanation : Marcius invites the Volscians, young and old, to thrust their swords into his body and to cut him to pieces. Then, turning to Aufidius whom he calls "faithless dog", he asks how he dares call him a "boy". Aufidius reminds the Volscians how he fought in Corioli single-handed and how he stirred a terror in their hearts just as an eagle causes the timid doves to flutter with fear in their nests. With such a record of bravery, how can he be insulted by being called a "boy" ?

(*Edges*—swords. *Writ*—written. *Annals*—history. *Dove-cote*—a nest of doves. *Fluttered*—shook).

83. *My rage is gone ;*
And I am struck with sorrow. Take him up.
Help, three o' the chiefest soldiers ; I'll be one.
Beat thou the drum, that it speaks mournfully :
Trail your steel pikes. Though in this city he
Hath widow'd and unchilded many a one,
Which to this hour bewail the injury,
Yet he shall have a noble memory.

(*Act V, sc. vi, lines 147 ff.*)

Context : These lines are the last speech in the play *Coriolanus*. This speech is made by Aufidius just after the assassination of Marcius. Having murdered Marcius, Aufidius is filled with regret and remorse.

Explanation : Aufidius says that his anger has cooled down and that he feels grief-stricken. He asks three of the foremost soldiers to help to carry the dead body of Marcius, while he himself will be the fourth. He orders a funeral march to be played while the dead body is being carried. He also orders the soldiers to trail their steel pikes along the ground to show that they are taking out a funeral procession. Aufidius promises a noble memorial to Marcius, in spite of the fact that in this city Marcius made many widows and deprived many parents of their sons by killing them, and although the bereaved families still lament their losses.

(*Chiefest*—foremost. *Unchilded*—deprived parents of their sons whom Marcius killed. *Bewail*—lament. *Memory*—memorial).

SHAKESPEARE'S

The Tragedy Of Coriolanus

TEXT WITH

Complete Paraphrase

(Readers will find the Paraphrase opposite to the Text)

THE PERSONS OF THE PLAY

CAIUS MARCIUS, *afterwards surnamed Coriolanus.*

COMINIUS, *consul of Rome, and general against the Volscians.*

TITUS LARTIUS, *in command against the Volscians.*

MENENIUS AGRIPPA, *an old patrician, friend to Coriolanus.*

SICINIUS VELUTUS, } *tribunes of the people.*
JUNIUS BRUTUS, }

MARCIUS, *son of Coriolanus.*

A Roman Herald.

TULLUS AUFIDIUS, *general of the Volscians.*

Lieutenant to Aufidius.

Conspirators with Aufidius.

NICANOR, *a Roman, acting as spy for the Volscians.*

ADRIAN, *a Volscian.*

A Citizen of Antium.

Two Volscian Guards.

VOLUMNIA, *mother to Coriolanus.*

VIRGILIA, *wife to Coriolanus.*

VALERIA, *friend to Virgilia.*

Gentlewoman, *attending on Virgilia.*

Roman and Volscian Senators, Patricians, AEdiles, Lictors, Soldiers, Citizens, Messengers, Servants to Aufidius, and other Attendants.

Scene: Rome and the neighbourhood; Corioli and the neighbourhood; Antium.

Time: 495—489 B. C.

ACT I

SCENE I. *Rome. A street.*

[*Enter a company of mutinous*[1] Citizens, *with staves*[2], *clubs*[3] *and other weapons.*]

First Cit. Before we proceed any further, hear me speak.

All. Speak, speak.

First Cit. You are all resolved rather to die than to *famish*[4] ?

All. Resolved, resolved.

First Cit. First, you know Caius Marcius is chief enemy to the people.

All. We know't, we know't.

First Cit. Let us kill him, and we'll have corn at our own price. Is't a *verdict*[5] ?

All. No more talking on't ; let it be done : away, away !

Sec. Cit. One word, good citizens.

First Cit. We are *accounted*[6] *poor* citizens, the *patricians*[7] *good*[8]. What authority *surfeits*[2] on would relieve us : if they would yield us but the *superfluity*[10] while it were *wholesome*[11], we might guess they relieved us *humanely*[12] ; but they think we are too *dear*[13] : the leanness that afflicts us, the *object*[14] of our misery, is as an *inventory*[15] to particularize their

1. rebellious.
2. plural of staff ; sticks.
3. sticks ; cudgels.
4. starve.
5. decision.
6. regarded as poor.
7. nobles.
8. rich.
9. gluts ; eats in excess of their real need.
10. surplus.
11. fit for human consumption.
12. kindly.
13. costly (to maintain).
14. sign
15. catalogue.

ACT I SCENE I

Rome. A Street.

[*Enter a crowd of rebellious citizens, carrying sticks and clubs, and other weapons.*]

First Citizen. Before we go any further, listen to me as I have something to say.

All. Speak, we are ready to listen.

First Citizen. Are you all determined to die a violent death in fighting rather than die slowly of starvation ?

All. Yes, we are determined.

First Citizen. First, you know that Caius Marcius is the greatest enemy of the people.

All. Yes, we are aware of that.

First Citizen. Let us kill him, and then we shall surely be able to buy corn as we could wish. Have you made up your minds on that point ?

All. Let there be no further discussion on this matter. Let us kill Caius Marcius. Let us go.

Second Citizen. Good citizens, listen to me. I have also to say something.

First Citizen. We are regarded as poor citizens, while the noblemen are rich and prosperous. If the noblemen, who wield power in the state, were to give us that part of food which is surplus with them, our misery would be relieved. If they would offer to us merely as much food as they cannot make use of themselves, we might suppose that they were prompted by feelings of kindness and sympathy in helping us, provided they were to give us that food before it becomes unfit for human consumption. But, in their opinion, we are not worth keeping alive at such a cost. The hunger, from which we are suffering and which is the sign of our distress, serves by way of contrast to make them aware of their own well-fed

abundance ; our *sufferance*[1] is a gain to them. Let us revenge this with our pikes, ere we become *rakes*[2] for the gods know I speak this in hunger for bread, not in thirst for revenge.

Sec. Cit. Would you proceed especially against Caius Marcius ?

All. Against him first : he's a very *dog*[3] to the commonalty.

Sec. Cit. Consider you what services he has done for his country ?

First Cit. Very well ; and could be content to give him good report for't, but that he pays himself with being proud.

Sec. Cit. Nay, but speak not *maliciously*[4].

First Cit. I say unto you, what he hath done famously, he did it to that end : though soft-conscienced men can be content to say it was for his country, he did it to please his mother, and to be partly proud ; which he is, even *to the altitude of his virtue*[5].

Sec. Cit. What he cannot help in his nature, you account a vice in him. You must in no way say he

1. suffering.
2. thin like rakes ; skeletons.
3. fierce like a dog.
4. with ill-will.
5. to the highest extent of his valour.

condition, each item of our want corresponding to some item of their plenty. Our misery adds something to their enjoyment of their prosperity. Let us take revenge upon them with our weapons before we are reduced by hunger to skeletons. As Heaven is my witness, it is the fear of starvation, not the desire for revenge, which prompts my angry words.

Second Citizen. Are you going to take action especially against Caius Marcius ?

First Citizen. We shall proceed against him first because he has not the least pity for the common people. (*Or*, We shall proceed against him first because he worries us, the common people, with all the fierceness of a dog worrying sheep.)

Second Citizen. Do you bear in mind what services he has rendered to his country ?

First Citizen. Yes, I do bear that in mind, and I should be quite ready to give him full credit for those services, but the trouble is that he rewards himself for those services by treating us with contempt.

Second Citizen. No, but speak fairly and justly and without any illwill.

First Citizen. I tell you that all the famous actions which he has performed were performed by him in order to feed his pride. There are some people who allow their feelings to prevail over their judgment. Such people do say that he performed those famous actions only to serve his country. But the fact is that he performed those actions partly to give pleasure to his mother by the reputation he thus gained, and partly to give pleasure to himself by feeding his pride which is as pre-eminent as his bravery.

Second Citizen. You are condemning him for a certain trait of character which is constitutional in him and for which he is not responsible. But it is impossible to accuse him, with any justice, of being

is *covetous*[1].

First Cit. If I must not, I need not be barren of accusations ; he hath faults, with surplus, to tire in repetition. [*Shouts within.*] What shouts are these ? The other side o' the city is risen : why stay we *prating*[2] here ? to the Capitol !

1. avaricious ; greedy.
2. talking idly.

All. Come, come.

First Cit. Soft ! who comes here

[*Enter* MENENIUS AGRIPPA.]

Sec. Cit. Worthy Menenius Agrippa ; one that hath always loved the people.

First Cit. He's one honest enough : *would*[3] all the rest were so !

3. wish.

Men. What work's, my countrymen, in hand ? where go you.
With *bats*[4] and *clubs*[5] ? The matter ? speak, I pray you.

4. cudgels.
5. sticks.

First Cit. Our business is not unknown to the senate ; they have had *inkling*[6] this fortnight what we intend to do, which now we'll show 'em in deeds. They say poor suitors have strong breaths : they shall know we have strong arms too.

6. notion ; faint idea.

Men. Why, masters, my good friends, mine honest neighbours,
do[7] yourselves ?

7. ruin.

First Cit. We cannot, sir, we are undone already.

avaricious (=greedy).

First Citizen. If it is impossible to accuse him of avarice, I still have plenty of other charges which I may justly bring against him. He has more than enough faults for one to grow tired in the course of enumerating them. (*Shouts are heard at a distance*). Where are these shouts coming from ? The people on the other side of the city have also risen in revolt against the authorities. Why are we wasting our time in chattering idly ? Let us rush to the Capitol.

All. Come, come.

First Citizen. Wait awhile ! Who comes here ?

'Enter Menenius Agrippa'

Second Citizen. Menenius Agrippa comes here. He is worthy of respect. He is one who has always loved the people.

First Citizen. Surely he has plenty of honesty in him (even though he belongs to the class of noblemen.) I wish all the other noblemen were also honest.

Menenius. What work, my countrymen, is about to be undertaken by you ? Where are you going, armed with sticks and cudgels ? What is the business you are engaged in ? I appeal to you to answer my questions.

First Citizen. Our business is no secret from the Senate. The Senators have had some idea during the last fortnight of what we intend to do. They will now see us giving a practical shape to our intentions. It is said that poor petitioners give out strong smells. But we shall show to the Senate that we have strong arms also to fight with.

Menenius. Worthy people, my good friends, my honest countrymen, have you decided to ruin yourselves ?

First Citizen. We are already ruined : we cannot ruin ourselves any further, sir.

Men. I tell you, friends, most charitable care
Have the *patricians*[1] of you. For your wants,
Your suffering in this *dearth*[2], you may as well
Strike at the heaven with your *staves*[3] as lift them
Against the Roman state, whose course will on
The way it takes, cracking ten thousand *curbs*[4]
Of more strong link asunder than can ever
Appear in your *impediment*[5]. For the dearth,
The gods, not the patricians, make it, and
Your knees to them, not arms, must help. *Alack*[6]
You are transported by calamity
Thither where more attends you, and you slander
The helms o' the state, who care for you like fathers,
When you curse them as enemies.

First Cit. Care for us ! True, indeed ! They ne'er cared for us yet : suffer us to famish, and their storehouses crammed with grain ; make edicts for *usury*[7] to support usurers ; repeal daily any wholesome act established against the rich, and provide more piercing statutes daily, to chain up and restrain the poor. If the wars eat us not up, they will ; and there's all the love they bear us.

Men. Either you must.
Confess yourselves wondrous malicious,
Or be accused of folly. I shall tell you

1. nobles.
2. famine.
3. sticks.
4. obstacles.
5. hindrance.
6. alas.
7. charging excessive interest on loans.

Menenius. I tell you my friends that the noblemen have the most anxious consideration for your welfare. So far as your needs are concerned, and as regards the misery you are suffering on account of the scarcity of corn, it will be as useless for you to attack the governing powers of Rome as it will be to aim your weapons at the sky. The course of the Roman State will go forward in the direction which it has marked out for itself, easily breaking down all the hindrances, even though those hindrances be ten thousand times more stubborn than any of the obstacles which you can place in its way. As for the scarcity of which you complain, that is due to the will of the gods, not to the enmity of the noblemen, and for all help against it, you must kneel in prayers to the gods instead of taking to your arms in order to defy the nobles. Alas, your misery is only leading you on into worse misfortune. The nobles care for your welfare as your guardians and fathers. They are the people who guide the affairs of the state, but you are defaming them and cursing them as if they were your enemies.

First Citizen. Care for us indeed! That is a pretty tale to tell us! They have never yet cared for our welfare. They are content to see us starve, while all the time their store-houses are bursting with a super-abundance of corn. They frame resolutions in favour of high rates of interest, whereby the exorbitant money-lenders are enabled to flourish. Everyday they go further in withdrawing those acts which serve us as a protection against the rich, and they enforce more and more rigid and cruel laws to curb, and to impose restrictions on, the poor people. If the wars do not make an end of us, the nobles will certainly kill us all, and that is about all the love that they feel for us.

Menenius. Either you must admit that you are full of extreme illwill or I shall have to bring the charge of folly against you. I am going to relate

A *pretty*[1] tale : it may be you have heard it,
But, since it serves my purpose, I will venture
To *stale't*[2] a little more.

First Cit. Well, I'll hear it, sir : yet you must not think to *fob off*[3] our disgrace with a tale : but, *an't*[4] please you, deliver.

Men. There was a time when all the body's *members*[5]
Rebelled against the belly, thus accused it :
That only like a *gulf*[6] it did remain
I' the midst o' the body, idle and unactive,
Still *cupboarding*[7] the *viand*[8], never bearing
Like labour with the rest, where the other instruments
Did see and hear, devise, instruct, walk, feel,
And, mutually participate, did minister
Unto the appetite and *affection*[9] common
Of the whole body. The belly answer'd—

First Cit. Well, sir, what answer made the belly ?

Men. Sir, I shall tell you. With a kind of smile,
Which ne'er came from the lungs, but even thus—
For, look you, I may make the belly smile
As well as speak—it *tauntingly*[10] replied
To the discontented members, the *mutinous*[11] parts
That envied *his*[12] receipt ; even so most fitly
As you *malign*[13] our senators for that
They are not such as you.

1. interesting
2. stale it by repetition.
3. cheat ; put off.
4. if it.
5. organs.
6. whirlpool.
7. receiving and sucking.
8. food.
9. inclination.
10. mockingly.
11. rebellious.
12. its.
13. speak ill of.

to you an interesting fable. It is possible that you have heard it before. But, because it suits my purpose, I shall take the liberty of making it a little more stale by repetition.

First Citizen. All right, I will hear it, sir. Yet you must not think that, merely by telling us a fable, you can prevail upon us to forget the humiliations which we have suffered. But if it pleases you, proceed with the fable.

Menenius. On one occasion all the organs of the body rose in revolt against the Belly. The accusation which they brought against the Belly was that it did nothing but remain in the centre of the body like a whirl-pool into which all nourishment was sucked and that it did not perform any labour which the other organs of the body performed. They further alleged that the Belly remained inactive while the other bodily and mental organs performed the duties of seeing, hearing, thinking, guiding one another, walking, feeling, each sharing with the other in the common labour, and fulfilling the desires and inclinations shared by the whole body. To this accusation, the Belly made a reply——

First Citizen. Well, sir, what was the reply given by the Belly ?

Menenius. Sir, I shall tell you. The Belly spoke with a smile which was bitter and not one that comes freely like a hearty laugh from the lungs. You may note that, if I have shown the Belly as having the power of speech, I may also show the Belly as having a capacity to smile. The Belly made a sarcastic reply to the dissatisfied organs or the rebellious organs which were feeling jealous of its receiving all the nourishment taken into the body. Indeed, the rebellious organs had no greater reason for their ill-will towards the Belly than you have for your illwill towords our senators for being something different from yourselves.

First Cit. Your belly's answer! What!
The kingly-crowned head, the *vigilant*[1] eye,
The counsellor heart, the arm our soldier,
Our *steed*[2] the leg, the tongue our trumpeter,
With other *muniments*[3] and petty helps
In this our fabric, if that they—

Men. What then?
'Fore me, this fellow speaks! What then? what then?

First Cit. Should by the *cormorant*[4] belly be restrain'd,
Who is the sink o' the body,—

Men. Well, what then?

First Cit. The former *agents*[5], if they did complain,
What could the belly answer?

Men. I will tell you;
If you 'll bestow a small—of what you have little—
Patience awhile, you'st hear the belly's answer.

First Cit. Ye're long about it.

Men. Note me this, good friend;
Your most grave belly was *deliberate*[6],
Not rash like his accusers, and thus answer'd:
"True is it, *my incorporate*[7] friends," *quoth*[8] he,
"That I receive the general food at first,
Which you do live upon; and fit it is,
Because I am the store-house and the shop

1. wide-awake.
2. horse.
3. instruments (to strengthen the body)
4. avaricious.
5. instruments or organs.
6. thoughtful.
7. belonging to the snme body.
8. said.

First Citizen. Let us have this answer given by the Belly. Come, tell it to us. The head which is to the body what a crown is to a king, the ever-alert eye, the heart from which we receive the dictates of wisdom, the arm which is our protection against an attack, our legs which carry us like a horse, the tongue which enables us to speak and shout, the other instruments with which the body is furnished and armed, and the smaller organs in this frame-work of our body made up of all these several parts and organs, if that they—

Menenius. What then ? My goodness ! This is a fellow who talks too much. Come out with what more you have to say.

First Citizen. (if that they) should be subordinate to the greedy or voracious Belly which serves the same purpose in the body which a sink serves in a kitchen.

Menenius. Well, what then ?

First Citizen. If those instruments and organs of the body did complain or grumble, surely the Belly could not have given a convincing reply.

Menenius. I will tell you what reply the Belly gave if for a moment or two you will show me a little patience of which you do not have much. Be a little patient and you shall hear the reply which the Belly gave.

First Citizen. You are taking too much time in giving us the Belly's reply.

Menenius. Make note of what I am going to say, good friend. The Belly was very earnest and thoughtful while giving his reply, not hasty like those who had made the accusation against him. He replied thus : "My friends, you who belong to the same body as myself, it is true that I first receive the food which belongs equally to all parts of the body and which is the source of nourishment for you all. And it is appropriate, because I am the store-house of the

Of the whole body : but, if you do remember,
I send it through the rivers of your blood,
Even to the court, the heart, to the seat o' the brain;
And, through the *cranks*[1] and *offices*[2] of man,
The strongest nerves and small inferior veins
From me receive that natural *competency*[3]
Whereby they live ; and though that all at once,
You, my good friends,"—this says the belly, mark me,—

First Cit. *Ay*[4], sir ; well, well.

1. passages.
2. chambers.
3. sufficient supply.
4. yes.

Men. "Though all at once cannot
See what I do deliver out to each,
Yet I can *make my audit up*[5], that all
From me do back receive the *flour*[6] of all,
And leave me but the *bran*"[7]. What say you to't ?

5. balance my accounts.
6. essence.
7. husk ; rubbish.

First Cit. It was an answer : how apply you this ?

Men. The senators of Rome are this good belly,
And you the mutinous members ; for examine
Their counsels and their cares, digest things rightly
Touching the *weal o' the common*[8], you shall find
No public benefit which you recieve
But it proceeds or comes from them to you
And no way from yourselves. What do you think,
You, the great toe of this assembly ?

8. common welfare.

First Cit. I the great toe ! why the great toe ?

whole body and all food is first deposited into me. But if you try to remember what you seem to have forgotten, I send nourishment through the channels of the blood to the heart and to the brain and, through the passages and chambers of the body, the strongest nerves as well as the petty veins receive from me that adequate nourishment by which they are able to remain alive. And though that all at once, you my good friends"—this is the important point made by the Belly.

First Citizen. Yes, sir ; get on with this answer that the Belly made.

Menenius. (The Belly went to say) "though all the organs cannot at the same time see what nourishment I send to each of them, yet I can produce a balance-sheet showing how my accounts stand and proving that all the organs and parts receive from me the finer part of the meal while I am left only with the husk or the refuse." What have you to say now after you have heard the answer made by the Belly ?

First Citizen. It was a good answer but how do you apply it to the present situation ?

Menenius. The Roman Senators are in the same position as the good Belly I have talked about while you, the rebellious people, may be compared to those rebellious organs of the body. For note the wise deliberations of the Senators and the concern they show for the people. Turn over in your mind how the public welfare stands and consider the matter impartially. You will surely find that every public benefit which you receive originates in the Senators or is made yours by them, but in no way is it of your making. What do you think, you, who may be described as the great toe of this crowd ?

First Citizen. Why do you call me the great toe ? What does that mean ?

Men. For that, being one o' the lowest, *basest*[1], poorest,
Of this most wise rebellion, thou go'st foremost :
Thou *rascal*[2], that art *worst in blood*[3] to run,
Lead'st first to win some *vantage*[4].
But make you ready your stiff bats and clubs :
Rome and her rats are at the point of battle ;
The one side must have *bale*[5].

[*Enter* CAIUS MARCIUS]

Hail[6], noble Marcius !

Mar. Thanks. What's the matter, you *dissentious*[7] rogues,
That, rubbing the poor itch of your opinion,
Make yourselves scabs ?

First Cit. We have ever your good word.

Mar. He that will give good words to thee will flatter
Beneath *abhorring*[8]. What would you have, you *curs*[9],
That like nor peace nor war ? the one *affrights*[10] you,
The other makes you proud. He that trusts to you,
Where he should find you lions, finds you hares ;
Where foxes, geese : you are no surer, no,
Than is the coal of fire upon the ice,
Or hailstone in the sun. Your virtue is
To make him worthy whose offence subdues him
And curse that justice did it. Who deserves greatness

1. meanest; most degraded.
2. a deer not fit to be hunted ; worthless fellow.
3. in the worst condition.
4. advantage.
5. harm.
6. greetings.
7. rebellious.
8. hating.
9. inferior dogs ; worthless fellows.
10. frightens.

Menenius. I call you the great toe because, being one of the humblest, meanest, and poorest of this wise rebellious crowd, you thrust yourself most forward like the toe of a foot. You worthless fellow, you are the least fitted of the whole crowd to be a leader. And yet you put yourself at the head of the crowd, only because you are seeking some personal advantage. But get ready with your stout sticks and cudgels for your defence. Soon a fight will break out between the Roman Senators and the worthless contemptible people like you, and one side or the other must perish in the conflict.

(Enter Caius Mercius)

I greet you noble Marcius !

Marcius. Thanks. What is the matter, you rebellious rascals ? In seeking to relieve the seditious irritation from which you are suffering, you only make yourselves more contemptible objects than before. (*Or*, In having this low desire to make your miserable opinions heard, you simply show what filthy fellows you are.)

First Citizen. We can be always sure of receiving abuse from you.

Marcius. He who speaks good words to you will flatter you to a degree of baseness that cannot be expressed even with the greatest contempt. You low breed dogs, what do you want ? You like neither peace nor war. War terrifies you ; while peace only puffs you up with arrogance. He who trusts you finds you timid like hares in matters in which he expects you to be brave like lions, and he finds you stupid as geese in matters in which he expected you to be cunning like foxes. You have no more steadfastness and endurance than a coal which quickly burns itself out if put upon ice, or than a hail-stone which quickly melts away in the heat of the sun. Your excellence consists in honouring a man whose wicked actions have brought him to ruin and in cursing an act of justice which has punished that man for his wicked actions.

Deserves your hate ; and your *affections*[1] are
A sick man's appetite, who desires most that
Which would increase his evil. He that depends
Upon your favours swims with fins of lead
And hews down oaks with rushes. Hang ye ! Trust ye ?
With every minute you do change a mind,
And call him noble that was now your hate,
Him vile that was *your garland*[2]. What's the matter,
That in these several places of the city
You cry against the noble senate, who,
Under the gods, keep you in awe, which else
Would feed on one another ? What's their seeking ?

Men. For corn at their own rates ; whereof, they say,
The city is well stored.

Mar. Hang 'em ! They say !
They'll sit by the fire, and presume to know
What's done i' the Capitol ; who's like to rise,
Who *thrives*[3] and who declines ; side *factions*[4] and give out
Conjectural[5] marriages ; making parties strong
And feebling such as stand not in their liking
Below their cobbled shoes. They say there's grain

1. inclinations.
2. object of your admiration or respect.
3. flourishes.
4. parties.
5. based on guess-work.

Whoever wins greatness by his admirable qualities becomes an object of your hatred. And your inclinations are like the appetite of a sick man who feels the greatest desire for such food as would only make his disease worse. He who depends upon your goodwill finds that goodwill to be a leaden weight, which will drag him down to the bottom of the water, instead of fins to keep him afloat on the surface of the water. He who depends upon your goodwill finds that goodwill to be as powerless to help him through difficulties as rushes are powerless to cut down oak trees. Curses on you! Do you think that any one in his senses would trust you? You are so inconstant that you change your opinions every minute. He whom you hated a little while ago is considered noble by you now, and he whom you honoured before seems wicked to you now. What is the reason that in the different parts of the city you agitate against the noble Senators who, next to the gods, exercise their authority over you to keep you in check because, without the fear of the Senators, you would fight among yourselves and kill one another. (*to Menenius*) What is it these people desire?

Menenius. Their desire is to have corn supplied to them at such a price as they may choose to fix. They say that there are considerable stocks of corn in the city.

Marcius. Curse them! What they say deserves no attention at all. People of their kind sit at home by the fire and yet have the shamelessness to claim that they know how state affairs are managed. They falsely claim to know who is likely to rise, who has become prosperous and who is falling from power. They will, in their idle talk, give their support to one party or another. They will talk about alliances based purely upon foolish guesses. They will impute great power to those parties whom they admire, and they will trample with their

enough !
Would[1] the nobility lay aside their *ruth*[2],
And let me use my sword, I'ld make a *quarry*[3]
With thousands of these *quarter'd*[4] slaves, as high
As I could *pick*[5] my lance.

Men. Nay[6], these are almost thoroughly persuaded ;
For though abundantly they lack discretion,
Yet are they *passing*[7] cowardly. But, I *beseech*[8] you,
What says the other troop ?

Mar. They are dissolved : hang 'em !
They said they were an-hungry ; sigh'd forth proverbs,
That hunger broke stone walls, that dogs must eat,
That meat was made for mouths, that the gods sent not
Corn for the rich men only : with these *shreds*[9]
They *vented*[10] their complainings ; which being answer'd,
And a petition granted them, a strange one—
To break the heart of generosity,
And make bold power look pale—they threw their caps
As they would hang them on the horns o' the moon,
Shouting their emulation[11].

Men. What is granted them ?

Mar. Five tribunes to defend their vulgar wisdoms,
Of their own choice : one's Junius Brutus,

1. I wish.
2. pity.
3. heap of dead bodies.
4. cut into pieces.
5. pitch
6. no.
7. exceedingly ; extremely.
8. entreat; pray.
9. bits (of popular wisdom)
10. gave outlet to.
11. each shouting louder than the other.

clumsy shoes upon those whom they dislike. These people dare to say that there is plenty of corn in the city ! I wish the nobles were to shed their pity and allow me to deal with these people with my sword. I would butcher thousands of these unworthy fellows till their mingled bodies make a pile as high as I could fling my lance.

Menenius. No, there is no need to rebuke them any further. All of them are now convinced of the folly they have committed. Although they are utterly devoid of sense, yet they have plenty of cowardice. But be good enough to tell me what the crowd on the other side of the city says.

Marcius. They have all dispersed, curse them ! They said that they were very hungry. They sorrowfully quoted proverbs. They said that hungry people could in their desperation break through stone walls, that even animals needed food to sustain themselves, that meat was intended to be eaten, and that the gods sent corn not only for the rich but also for the poor. With such pieces of proverbial sayings they gave expression to their grievances. When their complaints had been answered and when a petition which they made was granted to them, they threw up their caps in joy as if they would hang those caps on the horns of the moon. Each of them at that time shouted louder than the others to show his satisfaction. The petition which they asked was a strange one. It is one which would humble the aristocracy to the dust and strike terror into the hearts of those who have been boldly exercising the power entrusted to them.

Menenius. What petition has been granted to them ?

Marcius. These vulgar fellows have demanded five tribunes for the protection of that wisdom which they believe they have, and those tribunes

Sicinius Velutus, and I know not—'*Sdeath*[1] !
The *rabble*[2] should have first unroof'd the city,
Ere so prevail'd with me : it will in time
Win upon power and throw forth greater themes
For *insurrection's*[3] arguing.

Men. This is strange.

Mar. Go, get you home, you *fragments*[4] !

[*Enter a* Messenger, *hastily*.]

Mess. Where's Caius Marcius ?

Mar. Here : what's the matter ?

Mess. The news is, sir, the Volsces are in arms.

Mar. I am glad on't : then we shall *ha*[5]' means to vent
Our *musty*[6] *superfluity*[7]. See, our *best elders*[8].

[*Enter* COMINIUS, TITUS LARTIUS, *and other* Senators ; JUNIUS BRUTUS *and* SICINIUS VELUTUS.]

First Sen. Marcius, 'tis true that you have lately told us ;
The Volsces are in arms.

Mar. They have a leader,
Tullus Aufidius, that will *put you to't*[9].
I sin in envying his nobility,
And were I any thing but what I am,
I would wish me only he.

Com. You have fought together.

Mar. Were half to half the world by the ears and he

1. God's death.
2. mob.
3. mutiny.
4. small pieces ; bit. of men.
5. have.
6. gone bad ; worthless.
7. surplus.
8. noble senators.
9. compel you to do your utmost.

are to be chosen by themselves. The tribunes whom they want are Junius Brutus, Sicinius Velutus, and others whose names I have forgotten. By God's death! I would have let that vulgar crowd destroy the whole city rather than have yielded to their demand. They would gradually snatch away the power which is at present in the hands of the nobles, and they would raise larger issues for rebels to debate upon.

Menenius. This is strange.

Marcius. Go away to your homes, you who are not worthy to be called men but who are mere portions of men.

Enter Messenger, hastily.

Messenger. Where is Caius Marcius ?

Marcius. Here I am. What is the matter ?

Messenger. The news, sir, is that the Volscians have taken up arms.

Marcius. I am glad to hear that. This means that we have got an opportunity to get rid of the worthless fellows who are to be found in such great abundance. See, there come our noble Senators.

Enter Cominius, Titus Lartius, *and other* Senators ; Junius Brutus *and* Sicinius Velutus.

First Senator. Marcius, what you told us recently has turned out to be true, namely, that the Volscians are preparing to attack us.

Marcius. The Volscians have a leader by the name of Tullus Aufidius, who will make it necessary for you to strain your efforts to the utmost. I envy that man for his noble character, even though it is a sin to be envious. If I were somebody else and not myself, then my only wish would be that I had been Tullus Aufidius.

Cominius. You have fought together before.

Marcius. If one half of the world were at war with the other half of the world, and Tullus Aufidius

Upon my party[1], I 'ld revolt, to make
Only my wars with him : he is a lion
That I am proud to hunt.

First Sen. Then, worthy Marcius,
Attend upon Cominius to these wars.

Com. It is your former promise.

Mar. Sir, it is ;
And I am constant. Titus Lartius, thou
Shalt see me once more strike at Tullus' face.
What, art thou *stiff*[2] ? stand'st out ?

Tit. No, Caius Marcius ;
I'll lean upon one crutch and fight with t'other,
Ere[3] stay behind this business.

Men. O, *true-bred*[4] !

First Sen. Your company to the Capitol ; where, I know,
Our greatest friends attend us.

Tit. [*To* Cominius] Lead you on.
[*To* Marcius] Follow Cominius ; we must follow you;
Right worthy you priority.

Com. Noble Marcius !

First Sen. [*To the* Citizens] *Hence*[5] to your home; be gone !

Mar. Nay, let them follow :
The Volsces have much corn ; take these rats thither
To gnaw their *garners*.[6] Worshipful *mutiners*[7],
Your *valour*[8] *puts well forth*[9] : pray, follow.

1. taking my side.
2. stiff with old age.
3. before.
4. nobly bred ; true Roman.
5. away from here.
6. store-houses.
7. rebels.
8. bravery.
9. makes a fine show.

were to be on my side, I would revolt with the object of having him as my opponent. He is brave like a lion and I would feel proud to fight against him.

First Senator. Then, worthy Marcius, you should accompany Cominius as his subordinate to fight against the Volscians.

Cominius. It is a promise that you made on a previous occasion.

Marcius. Sir, I admit that I made the promise and I am faithful to it. Titus Lartius, you will see me once more striking at the face of Tullus Aufidius. What is the matter ? Are you too old ? Will you keep aloof from this fight ?

Titus. No, Caius Marcius ; even if I am so old as to need crutches, I shall support myself on one crutch and fight with the other, but I would certainly not stay behind and miss the opportunity of fighting.

Menenius. You are a true Roman of noble breeding.

First Senator. Go with us to the Capitol where I know our best friends are already waiting for us.

Titus. [*to Cominius*] You lead us.

[*to Marcius*] You go after Cominius and we shall come after you, you being well worthy of going before us.

Cominius. Noble Marcius !

First Senator. (to the citizens) Go away to your homes. Leave this place and go.

Marcius. No, let them follow us if they have any courage. The Volscians have plenty of corn. Let these worthless fellows go and snatch corn from the Volscian stores. Respected rebels, your bravery shows itself abundantly. Please follow.

[Citizens *steal away*. *Exeunt all but* SICINIUS *and* BRUTUS.

Sic. Was ever man so proud as is this Marcius ?

Bru. He has no equal.

Sic. When we were chosen tribunes for the people,—

Bru. Mark'd you his lip and eyes ?

Sic. Nay, but his *taunts*[1].

Bru. Being moved, he will not spare *to gird the gods*[2].

Sic. Be-mock the modest moon.

Bru. The present wars devour him : he is grown
Too proud to be so valiant.

Sic. Such a nature,
Tickled with good success, *disdains*[3] the shadow
Which he treads on at noon : but I do wonder
His insolence can *brook*[4] to be commanded
Under Cominius.

Bru. Fame, at the which he aims,
In whom already he's well graced, can not
Better be held nor more attain'd than by
A place below the first : for what *miscarries*[5]
Shall be the general's fault, though he perform
To the utmost of a man, and *giddy censure*[6]
Will then cry out of Marcius "O, if he
Had borne the business !"

1. sarcastic remarks.
2. to mock at the gods.
3. scorns.
4. suffer ; tolerate.
5. goes wrong.
6. inconstant public opinion.

(*The* Citizens, *feeling ashamed of themselves, disperse. All go except* Sicinius *and* Brutus.)

Sicinius. I have known of nobody as proud as this Marcius.

Brutus. Yes, indeed. There is no one to equal him in pride.

Sicinius. When we were selected tribunes by the people—

Brutus. Did you notice the contemptuous movement of his lips and the contemptuous expression in his eyes at that time ?

Sicinius. You speak of his lips and eyes. But the mocking remarks that he made were even more scornful.

Brutus. When provoked, that man will not hesitate even to mock at the gods.

Sicinius. No, he will not hesitate to mock even at the moon who is so modest and chaste.

Brutus. May the war now at hand swallow him up ! He is puffed up beyond measure by the consciousness of his own heroism.

Sicinius. A man of his nature, when flattered by success, feels contemptuous of even his own shadow as he treads upon it at noon-time. But I am really surprised how an arrogant man like him can endure to be a subordinate of Cominius.

Brutus. He has already been well favoured with fame. His object now is to earn more fame. Fame cannot be more securely held, nor acquired in fuller measure, than by one who accupies a position subordinate to the chief command ; because if anything goes wrong, it will be regarded as the fault of the chief commander even though the chief commander's performance be as complete as is possible to any man. In that case the fickle opinion of the multitude will thus declare itself about Marcius, "How different would the result have been if Marcius had been in chief command of the forces !"

Sic. Besides, if things go well,
Opinion that so sticks on Marcius shall
Of *his demerits*[1] rob Cominius.

Bru. Come :
Half all Cominius' honours are to Marcius,
Though Marcius earn'd them not, and all his faults
To Marcius shall be honours, though indeed
In *aught*[2] he *merit*[3] not.

Sic. *Let's hence*[4], and hear
How the dispatch is made, and in what fashion,
More than *his singularity*[5], he goes
Upon this present action.

Bru. Let's along. [*Exeunt.*

1. what he deserves ; his deserts.
2. anything.
3. deserve.
4. let us go from here.
5. his own proud and haughty attitude.

SCENE II

Corioli. The Senate-house.

[*Enter* TULLUS AUFIDIUS *with* Senators *of Corioli.*]

First Sen. So, your opinion is, Aufidius,
That they of Rome are enter'd in our counsels
And know how we proceed.

Auf. Is it not yours ?
What ever have been thought on in this state,
That could be brought to bodily act *ere*[6] Rome
Had *circumvention*[7] ? 'Tis not four days gone
Since I heard thence ; these are the words : I think
I have the letter here ; yes, here it is.
[*Reads.*["They have *press'd a power*[8], but it is not known
Whether for east or west : the *dearth*[9] is great ;
The people *mutinous*[10], and it is rumour'd,

6. before.
7. information enabling Rome to outwit our plans.
8. raised an army.
9. famine.
10. rebellious.

Sicinius. Besides, if things go well, the favourable opinion, which clings so firmly to everything that Marcius does, shall deprive Cominius of his deserts (=the reward due to him).

Brutus. Come ; half the glory, which Cominius may win, is sure to be attributed to Marcius, even though Marcius may not be entitled to it. And all the faults of Cominius are sure to bring, by contrast, honour to Marcius, even if in reality Marcius may do nothing to deserve appreciation.

Sicinius. Let us go from here and find out the manner in which the business of the sending forth of troops is being managed and also the manner in which Marcius, besides his characteristic pride and self-conceit, goes forth to the war.

Brutus. Let us go along together.

ACT I, SCENE II

Corioli. The Senate-House

Enter Tullus Aufidius, with Senators of Corioli.

First Senator. So, in your opinion, Aufidius, the Roman authorities have come to know of our plans and are aware of what we are going to do.

Aufidius. Do you not believe so too ? What discussions have we ever held in this state and what plans have we ever formed and been able to carry out without Rome coming to know of it ? (*Or*, whenever we have formed any plans and tried to carry them out, the Romans have always out-witted us.) It is hardly four days since I had news from Rome. Here are the words which were conveyed to me. I think I have got the letter with me. Yes, here it is. (*Reads*) "The Romans have enrolled a force, but it is not known whether these troops are to be dispatched to the East or to the West (that is, whether they are to be sent against the Volscians or against some other enemy). There is a great scarcity

Cominius, Marcius your old enemy,
Who is of Rome worse hated than of you,
And Titus Lartius, a most valiant Roman,
These three lead on this *preparation*[1]
Whither 'tis bent : most likely 'tis for you :
Consider of it."

First Sen. Our army's in the field :
We never yet made doubt but Rome was ready
To answer us[2].

Auf. Nor did you think it folly
To keep your *great pretences*[3] *veil'd*[4] till when
They needs must show themselves ; which in the hatching,
It seem'd, appear'd to Rome. By the discovery
We shall be *shorten'd*[5] in our aim, which was
To take in many towns *ere*[6] almost Rome
Should know we were *afoot*[7].

Sec. Sen. Noble Aufidius,
Take your commission ; *hie*[8] you to your *bands*[9] :
Let us alone to guard Corioli :
If they set down before's, for *the remove*[10]
Bring up your army ; but, I think, you'll find
They've not prepared for us.

Auf. O, doubt not that ;
I speak from certainties. Nay, more,
Some *parcels*[11] of their power are forth already,
And only hitherward. I leave your honours.
If we and Caius Marcius chance to meet,
'Tis sworn between us we shall ever strike

1. campaign.
2. to meet and fight us.
3. important plans.
4. hidden.
5. held up.
6. before.
7. on the march.
. hurry.
9. troops.
10. the rais- ng of
detachments.

of food. The people are rebellious. And it is rumoured that Cominius, Marcius your old enemy (who is hated by the people of Rome even more than he is hated by you), and Titus Lartius, one of the bravest Romans—these three are leading this force, which has been assembled, to its destination, whatever it may be. This force is most likely directed against you. Make note of it."

First Senator. Our army is in the field. We never had any doubt that the Romans were prepared to meet us.

Aufidius. Nor did you think it foolish to keep your important plans a secret till such time as they would inevitably become known. (Or, it was unwise on your part not to keep your great designs a secret as long as they could possibly be kept a secret). The result is that your plans became known to Rome while they were still being prepared. This premature knowledge of our plans by the Romans will curb our project which was to capture many towns before the Roman authorities coming to know that we had started our march.

Second Senator. Noble Aufidius, take your commission whereby you have been invested with the command of the troops. Make haste to join your troops. Leave us alone to defend Corioli. If the enemy forces should besiege us, bring your army to raise the siege. But I think that you will find that the Romans have not prepared any force against us.

Aufidius. O, do not have any doubt about that. I speak from sure knowledge. (*Or*, Do not have the feeling that the Romans have prepared no force against us because I am sure that they have.) No, there is something more. Some small portions of their force are already on the move, and are directed against this city and none other. I leave your honours. If we have an encounter with Caius Marcius, there is a pledge between us that both will

Till one can do no more.

All. The gods assist you!

Auf. And keep your honours safe!

First Sen. Farewell!

Sec. Sen. Farewell.

All. Farewell. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III

Rome. A room in MARCIUS' *house.*

[*Enter* VOLUMNIA *and* VIRGILIA, *mother and wife to* MARCIUS. *They set them down on two low stools, and sew.*]

Vol. I pray you, daughter, sing; or express yourself in a more *comfortable sort,*[1] if my son were my husband, I should freelier rejoice in that absence wherein he won honour than in the embracements of his bed where he would show most love. When yet he was but tender-bodied and the only son of my womb when youth with *comeliness*[2] plucked all gaze his way, when for a day of kings' entreaties a mother should not sell him an hour from *her beholding*[3], I, considering how honour would *become*[4] such a person, that it was no better than picture-like to hang by the wall, if *renown*[5] made it not stir, was pleased to let him seek danger where he was like to find fame. To a cruel war I sent him; from whence he returned, his *brows bound with oak*[6]. I tell thee, daughter, I sprang not more in joy at first hearing he was a man-child than now in first seeing he had proved himself a man.

1. comforting, cheerful way.
2. good looks.
3. her gaze.
4. suit.
5. fame.
6. honoured for bravery

continue to fight against each other till one has been utterly disabled or killed.

All. May the gods help you !

Aufidius. And may the gods protect your honourable selves !

First Senator. Farewell.

Second Senator. Farewell.

All. Farewell. *(They go)*

ACT I, SCENE III

Rome. A room in Marcius' house.

'Enter Volumnia and Virgilia, mother and wife to Marcius : they set them down on two low stools, and sew'

Volumnia. I request you, daughter, to sing or to express yourself in a more cheerful manner. If I were in your place, I should feel more happy during the absence of Marcius than in the enjoyment of sexual pleasures with him in bed, because his absence is due to a quest of military glory. There was a time when Marcius had a delicate body and was my only issue, when his youthful body attracted the glances of everybodv, when I would certainly have refused to part with him for a single hour even if kings had pressed me with day-long appeals. Yet, I felt pleased to let him go in search of danger where he was likely to win glory. I realised that such glory would lend great charm to one so good-looking, and that such good looks, without glory to set them aglow, would be no better than a picture to hang on a wall. I sent him to a bloody war in which he won laurels and was honoured with an oaken garland. I tell you, daughter, I did not experience so much delight on knowing that I had given birth to a male child than I experienced later on when my son had proved himself brave and valiant.

Vir. But he had died in the business, madam; how then?

Vol. Then his ***good report***[1] should have been my son; I therein would have found ***issue***[2]. Hear me profess sincerely: had I a dozen sons, each in my love alike, and none less dear than thine and my good Marcius, I had rather had eleven die nobly for their country than one ***voluptuously surfeit***[3] out of action.

Enter a Gentlewoman

Gent. Madam, the Lady Valeria is come to visit you.

Vir. ***Beseech***[4] you, give me leave to ***retire myself***[5].

Vol. Indeed, you shall not.
Methinks[6] I hear hither your husband's drum;
See him pluck Aufidius down by the hair;
As children from a bear, the Volsces shunning him:
Methinks I see him stamp thus, and call thus:
"Come on, you cowards! you were ***got***[7] in fear,
Though you were born in Rome": his bloody brow
With his mail'd hand then wiping, forth he goes,
Like to a harvest-man that's task'd to mow
Or all, or lose his ***hire***[8].

Vir. His bloody brow! O *Jupiter*[9], no blood!

1. fame.
2. offspring
3. live a life of pleasure and over-indulgence.
4. pray.
5. withdraw.
6. I think.
7. conceived.
8. wages.
9. the chief god.

Virgilia. But how would you have felt, madam, in case he had died in the war ?

Volumnia. Then the fame earned by him would have been to me in the place of my son. I would have cherished his fame as though it had been the off-spring of my womb. Listen to the following words which I am going to say in all sincerity. If I had a dozen sons, each of them equally dear, and none of them less dear than good Marcius whom both you and I love so much, I should be more glad if eleven of them die bravely in the service of their country than if one of them lives a life of sheer inactivity and of pleasure and over-indulgence.

Enter a Gentlewoman

Gentlewoman. Madam, the Lady Valeria has come on a visit to you.

Virgilia. I pray to you to permit me to withdraw and to retire to my own chamber.

Volumnia. You will certainly not withdraw to your chamber. It seems to me that I hear the sound of your husband's drum being carried to this place. In my imagination I can see him seize Aufidius by the hair and throw him down. I can see the Volscians running away from him in fear as children fearfully run away from a bear. I think I can see him angrily stamping upon the ground with his foot and thus shout to his own troops, "Come on, you cowards. It seems that you were conceived at a time when your parents were in a state of fear. Though you were born in Rome, you do not possess the true Roman courage." Then wiping the blood from his forehead with his hand covered in armour, he goes forward like a labourer hired for harvest on the condition that he must get in the whole crop or receive no wages for his labour.

Virgilia. With his bleeding forehead ! Jupiter forbid he should receive any wounds or that his blood should be spilt.

Vol. Away, you fool! it more becomes a man
Than gilt his trophy: the breasts of *Hecuba*[1],
When she did suckle *Hector*[2], look'd not lovelier
Than Hector's forehead when it spit forth blood
At Grecian sword, *contemning*[3]. Tell Valeria,
We are fit to bid her welcome. [*Exit* Gentlewoman.

Vir. Heavens bless my lord from *fell*[4] Aufidius!

Vol. He'll beat Aufidius' head below his knee
And tread upon his neck.

[*Enter* VALERIA, *with an* Usher, *and* Gentlewoman.]

Val. My ladies both, good day to you.

Vol. Sweet madam.

Vir. I am glad to see your ladyship.

Val. How do you both? you are *manifest*[5] housekeepers. What are you sewing here? A fine *spot*[6], in good faith. How does your little son?

Vir. I thank your ladyship; well, good madam.

Vol. He had rather see the swords, and hear a drum, than look upon his schoolmaster.

Val. O' my word, the father's son: I'll swear, 'tis a very pretty boy. O' my troth, I looked upon him

1. mother of Hector.
2. ancient warrior of Troy.
3. scornful.
4. cruel.
5. obvious; well-known.
6. pattern of embroidery.

Volumnia. Do not talk in that foolish manner. Blood adorns a man better than the plating of gold adorns a monument erected to him. The breasts of Hecuba, when she suckled her son Hector, did not look more beautiful than Hector's forehead when, as though in scorn of enemy blows, the blood spurted from his wounded forehead in the face of his Grecian enemies. (*Or*, when Hector was wounded by his Grecian enemies, blood spurted from his forehead, as though in scorn of their blows. At that time, Hector's bleeding forehead looked more beautiful than the breasts of his mother Hecuba when she had suckled him as a child.) Tell Valeria that we are ready to welcome her to our house.

(*Gentlewoman goes*)

Virgilia. May the Heavens show their love for my lord by protecting him from the cruel Aufidius !

Volumnia. Your lord will knock down the head of Aufidius below his knee and then he will trample upon the neck of Aufidius.

Enter Valeria, *with a* door-keeper *and* Gentlewoman

Valeria. My ladies both, good day to you.

Volumnia. You are very sweet, madam.

Virgilia. I am glad to see your ladyship.

Valeria. How are both of you getting on ? You are obviously stay-at-homes. What needle-work are you engaged upon ? This is surely a pretty pattern of embroidery. How is your little son getting on ?

Virgilia. I thank your ladyship. My son is getting on well, good madam.

Volumnia. He takes more pleasure in seeing the swords and hearing the drums of war than in his studies.

Valeria. A true son of his father's, I declare. (*Or*, a chip of the old block, I say.) I will swear that he is a very pretty boy. I assure you I watched him

o' Wednesday half an hour together : has such a con-*firmed*[1] *countenance*[2]. I saw him run after a gilded butterfly ; and when he caught it, he let it go again ; and after it again ; and over and over he comes, and again ; *catched*[3] it again ; or whether his fall enraged him, or how 'twas, he did so set his teeth and tear it ; O, I warrant, how he *mammocked*[4] it !

One on's father's moods.

Val. Indeed, la, 'tis a noble child.

Vir. A *crack*[5], madam.

Val. Come, lay aside your *stitchery*[6] ; I must have you play the idle huswife with me this afternoon.

Vir. No, good madam ; I will not out of doors.

Val. Not out of doors !

Vol. She shall, she shall.

Vir. Indeed, no, by your patience ; I'll not over the threshold till my lord return from the wars.

Val. Fie, you confine yourself most unreasonably : come, you must go visit the good lady that lies in.

Vir. I will wish her speedy strength, and visit her with my prayers ; but I cannot go thither.

Val. Why, I pray you ?

Vir. 'Tis not to save labour, nor that I want love.

1. firm ; resolute.
2. face.
3. caught
4. tore to pieces.
5. forward little boy.
6. needle-work.

playing about on Wednesday for half an hour together. He has a very determined face. I saw him running after a bright-coloured butterfly. When he caught it, he let it go and ran after it again. Down he fell, head over heels, but in a moment up he got upon his legs, again in full chase. He caught the butterfly again and, whether his fall had made him angry or there was some other reason, he resolutely clenched his teeth and tore it. O, I cannot tell you how pitilessly he tore the butterfly to pieces.

Volumnia. Just like his father in one of his angry moods.

Valeria. Indeed ; he is surely a noble child.

Virgilia. A naughty child, madam.

Valeria. Com ·, put aside your stitching. I am determined to make you give up your household cares this afternoon and take a holiday.

Virgilia. No, good madam ; I am determined not to go out of my house.

Valeria. It is strange for you] to make up your mind not to go out of your house.

Volumnia. She certainly shall go out of the house.

Virgilia. Indeed, I will not if you will pardon me. I will not stir a step from home till my husband returns from fighting.

Valeria. That is a shame. You confine yourself to the house without sufficient reason. Come, you must pay a visit to that good lady who has just given birth to a child.

Virgilia. I send her my best wishes for a speedy improvement in her health and I will offer prayers on her behalf instead of paying a visit to her. Indeed, I cannot go there.

Volumnia. I request you to tell me why.

Virgilia. It is neither because I want to save myself the physical exertion of going there nor because I am lacking in goodwill.

Val. You would be another *Penelope*[1] : yet, they say, all the yarn she spun in Ulysses' absence did but fill *Ithaca*[2] full of moths. Come ; I would your *cambric*[3] were *sensible*[4] as your finger, that you might leave pricking it for pity. Come, you shall go with us.

1. devoted wife.
2. native island of Ulysses.
3. fabric ; linen.
4. sensitive

Vir. No, good madam, pardon me ; indeed, I will not forth.

Val. In truth, *la*[5], go with me ; and I'll tell you excellent news of your husband.

5. lo ! ah ! indeed !

Vir. O, good madam, there can be none yet.

Val. *Verily*[6], I do not *jest*[7] with you ; there came news from him last night.

6. truly.
7. joke.

Vir. Indeed, madam ?

Val. In earnest, it's true ; I heard a senator speak it. Thus it is : the Volsces have an army forth ; against whom Cominius the general is gone, with one part of our Roman power : your lord and Titus Lartius are set down before their city Corioli ; they nothing doubt prevailing and to make it brief wars. This is true, on mine honour ; and so, I pray, go with us.

Vir. Give me excuse, good madam ; I will obey you in everything *hereafter*[8].

Vol. Let her alone, lady : as she is now, she will but *disease*[9] our better mirth.

8. from now onwards.
9. spoil.

Valeria. You wish to show your loyalty to your husband as strongly as Penelope did to her husband Ulysses. Yet, it is said that all the spinning and weaving of Penelope during the period of the absence of her husband, Ulysses, merely filled her island-country, Ithaca, with moths. Come ; I wish that the linen on which you are working were as capable of feeling pain as your fingers so that you would cease thrusting your needle into it out of mere pity. Come, you must accompany us.

Virgilia. No, good madam, excuse me. I will certainly not go out of doors.

Valeria. I assure you that, if you go with me, I will tell you very good news of your husband.

Virgilia. O, good madam, news of my husband cannot have arrived so soon.

Valeria. Indeed, I am not joking with you. News of him did come last night.

Virgilia. Is it really so, madam ?

Valeria. Indeed, what I have said is true. I heard this news from a Senator. This is what I heard : The Volscians have sent an army into our territory and Cominius the general has gone with one part of our forces to fight against it. Your husband and Titus Lartius have laid a seige to the Volscian city, Corioli and they have no doubt of winning a victory and making short work of the war. I swear by my honour that this is true. And, now that I have given you good news, I request you to accompany us.

Virgilia. Pardon me on this occasion, good madam. I will obey you in everything afterwards.

Volumnia. Let her alone, lady. In her present mood, she will merely spoil our enjoyment if she goes with us.

Val. *In troth*[1], I think she would. Fare you well, then. Come, good sweet lady. *Prithee*[2], Virgilia, turn thy *solemness*[3] out o' door, and go along with us.

Vir. No, at a word, madam ; indeed, I must not. I wish you much mirth.

1. in truth.
2. pray you
3. earnestness ; over-seriousness.

Val. Well, then, farewell. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV

Before Corioli

Enter with drums and colours[4], MARCIUS, TITUS LARTIUS, Captains *and* Soldiers. *To them a* Messenger.

4. banners ; flags.

Mar. *Yonder*[5] comes news. A *wager*[6] they have met.

5. there.
6. bet.

Lart. My horse to yours, no.

Mar. 'Tis done.

Lart. Agreed.

Mar. Say, has our general met the enemy ?

Mess. They lie in view ; but have not *spoke*[7] as yet.

7. encountered.

Lart. So, the good horse is mine.

Mar. I'll buy him off you.

Lart. No, I'll nor sell nor give him : lend you him I will

For half a hundred years. Summon the town.

Valeria. Indeed, I think she would. Farewell, then. Come, good sweet lady. I pray you, Virgilia, get rid of your sadness, and go along with us.

Virgilia. No, in a word, madam. Surely I feel compelled to refuse you. However, I wish you to enjoy yourself fully.

Valeria. Well then, good-bye. (They go)

ACT I SCENE IV

Before the gates of Corioli

Enter Marcius, Titus Lartius, Captains *and* Soldiers, *with drums, trumpets and colours. To them a* Messenger.

Marcius. There comes somebody with news. I can bet with you that the armies have engaged themselves in a battle.

Lartius. I will stake my horse against yours that the armies have not yet met.

Marcius. Agreed ; I accept the wager.

Marcius. (*to the messenger*) Tell me where our general is fighting against the enemy.

Messenger. The armies lie in sight of each other but they have not yet started fighting.

Lartius. There you are ; you have lost the wager and your horse now belongs to me.

Marcius. I will pay you the price of the horse and retain him with me.

Lartius. No. I will not sell the horse to you. Nor will I give the horse to you as a gift. But I will lend him to you for fifty years. (Or, I will lend the horse to you for as long as you like.) (*to the trumpeter*) Blow the trumpet to give a signal to the townspeople to come and talk to us.

Mar. How far off lie these armies ?

Mess. Within this mile and half.

Mar. Then shall we hear their *'larum*[1], and they ours.
Now, *Mars*[2], I *prithee*[3], make us quick in work,
That we with smoking swords may march from hence,
To help our fielded friends ! Come, blow thy blast.

They sound a parley[4]. *Enter two* Senators *with others on the walls of Corioli.*

Tullus Aufidius, is he within your walls ?

First Sen. No, nor a man that fears you less than he,
That's lesser than a little. [*Drums afar off.*] *Hark*[5] ! our drums
Are bringing forth our youth. We'll break our walls,
Rather than they shall *pound us up*[6] : our gates,
Which yet seem shut, we have but pinn'd with *rushes*;[7]
They'll open of themselves. [*Alarum*[8] *afar off.*] *Hark*[9] you, far off !
There is Aufidius ; list what work he makes
Amongst your *cloven*[10] army.

Mar. O, they are at it !

Lart. Their noise be our instruction. Ladders, ho !

1. alarum ; call to arms.
2. god of war.
3. pray you.
4. conference (with the enemy)
5. listen.
6. confine us. ; besiege us.
7. kind of plant ; something trifling.
8. call to arms.
9. listen.
10. split.

Marcius. How far off lie those armies ?

Messenger. Less than a mile and a half away.

Marcius. Then we shall be able to hear their call to arms and they will be able to hear ours. Now, O god of wars, I pray you, help us to complete our work here quickly so that, with our swords hot with the blood of our murdered enemies, we may march from here to help our friends who are engaged in battle. Come, blow your trumpet.

They sound the trumpet in order to call a conference with the enemy. Enter two Senators *of the* Volscians *with others on the walls.*

Marcius. Tullus Aufidius, is he inside your city ?

First Senator. No, he is not inside the city, nor is there any one whose fear of you is greater than his, and that (fear) is absolutely nothing. (No, Tullus Aufidius is not inside the city. Tullus Aufidius is not in the least afraid of you. Nor is there anyone in the city who feels in the least afraid of you.)

(*The sound of drums is heard at a distance.*)

Listen, our drums are being sounded and are being followed by our youthful soldiers. We will break our wall rather than allow the enemy to confine us inside the city. Our gates which seem to be closed so far have been fastened with bars that can be snapped in a moment ; they will open automatically.

(*The sound of battle is heard in the distance.*)

Listen to these alarms of battle coming from a distance. Aufidius is there. You may guess from the sound of his drums how he has forced his way through your army, and is now making short work of its destruction.

Marcius. O, they are engaged in hot fighting !

Lartius. Judging by the noise, the forces of Aufidius are fighting with great fury. Let us follow their example and fight with greater fury. Fix the ladders against the walls, ho !

Enter the army of the Volsces.

Mar. They fear us not, but *issue forth*[1] their city.
Now put your shields before your hearts, and fight
With hearts more *proof*[2] than shields. Advance, brave Titus :
They do *disdain*[3] us much beyond our thoughts,
Which makes me sweat with wrath. Come on, my fellows :
He that retires, I'll take him for a Volsce,
And he shall feel mine *edge*[4].

Alarum. The Romans *are beat back to their trenches. Re-enter* MARCIUS, *cursing.*

Mar. All the contagion of the south light on you,
You shames of Rome ! you herd of—Boils and plagues
Plaster you o'er, that you may be *abhorr'd*[5]
Further than seen and one infect another
Against the wind a mile ! You *souls of geese*[6],
That bear the shapes of men, how have you run
From slaves that apes would beat ! *Pluto*[7] and hell !
All hurt behind ; backs red, and faces pale
With flight and *agued fear*[8] ! *Mend*[9] and charge home,
Or, by the fires of heaven, I'll leave the foe

1. come out of.
2. impenetrable.
3. scorn.
4. edge of the sword.
5. hated.
6. cowards.
7. god of the underworld
8. shaking; trembling with fear.
9. improve (by showing more courage.)

The gates are thrown wide open and the Volscians rush out to attack the Romans.

Marcius. The Volscians do not seem to be afraid of us, but are coming boldly out of their city. Now defend your bodies with your shields, and fight with hearts more impenetrable than shields. (Or, fight with hearts more strong against fear than shields are against enemy blows.) Go forward, brave Titus. The enemies are scornful of us and are ready to fight with a daring such as we never expected. Their attitude of scorn makes me perspire with indignation. Come on, my soldiers. If any of you tries to retreat, I will treat him as though he were a Volscian, and he shall feel the sharp edge of my sword.

The alarm of battle is heard. The Romans are pushed back by the Volscians to their trenches. Re-enter Marcius, cursing his soldiers for their retreat.

Marcius. May you fall victims to the pestilence of the South! You are a disgrace to your native country. You are a multitude of—. May you be covered from head to foot with boils and plague-sores, so that the foul smell coming from your bodies should make you hateful even when you are too far away to be visible! May your infection be carried from one to another over a long distance in the very teeth of the wind! You have the bodies of human beings but the cowardly spirits of geese. You have degraded yourselves by running away from the enemies who are so worthless and timid that even apes would have been able to drive them back. May the wrath of hell and of the god of hell descend upon you! All of you have run backwards. Your backs are bloody with wounds received in the fighting, and your faces are pale with the terror which made you run away and which makes you tremble as if you are suffering from ague. Recover your courage and pierce the enemy ranks with your attack. If you fail to do so, I swear by the sun, the moon and the stars

And make my wars on you : look to't : come on ;

If you'll stand fast, we'll beat them to their wives,

As they us to our trenches followed.

Another alarum. The Volsces *fly*, and MARCIUS *follows them to the gates.*

So, now the gates are *ope*[1] : now prove good *seconds*[2]:
'Tis for the followers fortune widens them,
Not for the fliers : mark me, and do the like.
[*Enters the gates.*

1. open.
2. supporters ; followers.

First Sol. *Fool-hardiness*[3] ; not I.

3. foolish rashness.

Sec. Sol. Nor I.
[MARCIUS *is shut in.*

First Sol. See, they have shut him in.

All. *To the pot*[4], *warrant him*[5].
[*Alarum continues.*

4. gone to his death.
5. I am certain about him.

Re-enter TITUS LARTIUS

Lart. What is become of Marcius ?

All. *Slain*[6], sir, doubtless.

6. murdered

First Sol. Following the fliers at the very heels,
With them he enters ; who, upon the sudden,
Clapp'd to[7] their gates : he is himself alone,
To answer[8] all the city.

Lart. O noble fellow !
Who *sensibly*[9] *outdares*[10] his senseless sword,
And, when it bows, stands up. Thou art left, Marcius :
A carbuncle entire[11], as big as thou art,

7. closed with a jerk.
8. to fight.
9. sensitive to pain.
10. surpasses in daring.
11. a full, complete precious stone.

that I will ignore the enemy and make an attack on you. Take care to obey my words. Come on ; if you show firmness and determination, we will surely beat them back so that they will be compelled to take shelter behind their wives just as a little while ago they were able to drive us back to our trenches.

Another sound of battle. The Volscians are driven back and take to their heels. Marcius chases them to the gates.

Marcius. Well, now the gates are open. Now show your valour in supporting my efforts. It is to admit us the pursuers, that Fortune opens the gates so wide, and not to admit these runaways. Observe me and follow my example. (*Enters the gates*)

First soldier. By entering the gates Marcius has merely shown a rash kind of courage. I refuse to follow him.

Second soldier. I too shall not follow. (*The gates close and Marcius is cut off from his soldiers.*)

First soldier. See, the enemies have closed the gates behind him.

All. He has gone to sure destruction. (*The sound of fighting continues*).

Re-enter Titus Lartius.

Lartius. What has happened to Marcius ?

All. Sir, he has undoubtedly been killed.

First soldier. He chased the fleeting Volscians close behind and entered the gates. The gates were suddenly shut by the enemies. He is there all by himself to face the whole city.

Lartius. O, noble Marcius ! Although you are capable of feeling pain, yet you show yourself less conscious of it than your sword which can feel no pain. You are a man who stands up erect and fearless even when his sword yields or is defeated. You are lost, Marcius ! You were more valuable than a

Were not so rich a jewel. Thou wast a soldier
Even to *Cato's*[1] wish, not fierce and terrible
Only in stokes ; but, with thy *grim*[2] looks and
The thunder-like *percussion*[3] of thy sounds,
Thou madest thine enemies shake, as i the world
Were *feverous*[4] and did tremble.

Re-enter MARCIUS, *bleeding, assaulted by the enemy.*

Firt Sol. Look, sir.
Lart. O, 'tis Marcius !
Let's *fetch him off*[5], or make remain alike.
[*They fight, and all enter the city.*

SCENE V

Corioli. A street.

Enter certain Romans, *with spoils.*

First Rom. This will I carry to Rome.
Sec. Rom. And I this.
Third Rom. A *murrain*[6] on't ! I took this for silver.

[*Alarum continues still afar off.*

Enter MARCIUS *and* TITUS LARTIUS *with a trumpet.*

Mar. See here these *movers*[7] that do prize their hours
At a *crack'd*[8] *drachma*[9] ! Cushions, leaden spoons,
Irons of a *doit*,[10] doublets that hangmen would
Bury with those that wore them, these base slaves,
Ere yet the fight be done, pack up : down with them!
And *hark*[11], what noise the general makes ! To him !
There is the man of my soul's hate, Aufidius,

1. a stern Roman moralist.
2. dreadful.
3. impact (of sound)
4. shaking with fear.
5. reseue him.
6. plague.
7. loiterers ; plunderers.
8. useless.
9. Greek coin worth a shilling.
10. a small Dutch coin.
11. listen.

whole precious stone as big in size as your body. You were a soldier exactly such as Cato would have desired. You were fierce and dreadful not only in the blows that you gave to the enemy, but with your dreadful appearance and the thunder-like sound of your blows on the armour of your enemies, you made the enemies tremble with fear so much that the whole world seemed to be feverish and trembling.

The gates re-open, and Marcius bleeding and being attacked by the enemy, is seen inside.

First soldier. Look there, sir.

Lartius. O, it is Marcius ! Let us go to to his rescue or stand by him to repel the enemy. (*They fight and all enter the city.*)

ACT I SCENE V

Corioli : A street.

Enter certain Romans, carrying some looted goods.

First Roman. This I will carry to Rome.

Second Roman. And I will carry this with me.

Third Roman. Curse it. I was under the wrong impression that what I had picked up was silver.

(*Sounds of the distant battle are still being heard.*)

Enter Marcius and Titus Lartius with a trumpeter.

Marcius. Look at these fellows who are busy ransacking the place for plunder. They think that their time is well spent if they can secure even the smallest booty. Cushions, spoons made of lead, bits of iron worth very little, garments which even the hangman would not think worth keeping with himself and which he would rather bury with the bodies of the hanged men—such are the things that our worthless and dishonourable soldiers are collecting even before the fight is over. A curse on them ! And listen, how loud is the noise which the Volscian general is

Piercing our Romans : then *valiant*[1] Titus, take
Convenient numbers to make good the city ;
Whilst I, with those that have the *spirit*[2] will haste
To help Cominius.

Lart. Worthy sir, thou bleed'st ;
Thy exercise hath been too violent
For a second course of fight.

Mar. Sir, praise me not ;
My work hath yet not warm'd me : fare you well :
The blood I drop is rather *physical*[3]
Than dangerous to me : to Aufidius thus
I will appear, and fight.

Lart Now the fair goddess, Fortune,
Fall deep in love with thee ; and her great charms
Misguide thy *opposers*[4]' swords ! Bold gentleman,
Prosperity *be thy page*[5]

Mar. Thy friend no less
Than those she placeth highest ! So, farewell.
[*Exit* MARCIUS.

Lart. Thou worthiest Marcius !
Go sound thy trumpet in the market-place ;
Call thither all the officers o' the town,
Where they shall know our mind : away ! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI

Near the camp of COMINIUS.

[*Enter* COMINIUS, *as it were in retire*[6], *with soldiers.*]

Com. Breathe you, my friends : well fought ; we are come off
Like Romans, neither foolish in our stands,

1. brave.
2. courage.
3. good for body.
4. opponents.
5. follow you like a page (boy-servant)
6. retreating.

making. Let me rush at him. There is the man whom I hate from the bottom of my soul. There is Aufidius forcing his way through our Roman soldiers. Then, brave Titus, take an adequate force to hold the city, while I will take some brave soldiers with me and go hastily in order to help Cominius.

Lartius. Noble sir, you are bleeding. Already you have undergone very strenuous exertion. It will not be wise for you to join a second bout of fighting.

Marcius. Sir, do not praise me. I have only just begun my work. Good-bye. The blood that is flowing from my body has more a medicinal effect on me than is harmful to me. I shall face Aufidius with the blood flowing from my wounds, and will thus fight him.

Lartius. May the beautiful goddess, Fortune, favour you with success ! May the powerful magic of that goddess misdirect or turn aside the blows of your enemies ! You are a brave gentleman. May success follow your foot-steps, as a page follows his master.

Marcius. May the goddess Fortune be as firm a friend to you as to those whom she raises to the greatest heights of prosperity ! So farewell.

Lartius. You most honourable Marcius ! (*Marcius goes.*) Go, blow your trumpet in the market-place in order to call the officers of the town there. There they shall learn what our intentions are. Go.

(*They go away*)

ACT I SCENE VI

[*Near the Roman camp. Enter* Cominius, *as if he has withdrawn from the fighting, with soldiers.*]

Cominius. Rest a little, my friends. You have fought well. We have given a good account of ourselves in the battle and have proved ourselves worthy Romans. We neither foolishly tried to maintain

Nor cowardly *in retire*[1] : believe me, sirs,
We shall be charged again. Whiles we have struck,
By *interims*[2] and *conveying gusts*[3] we have heard
The charges of our friends. Ye Roman gods !
Lead their successes[4] as we wish our own ,
That both our *powers*[5], with smiling front encountering,
May give you *thankul sacrifice*[6].

[*Enter a* Messenger.]

Thy news ?

Mess. The citizens of Corioli have *issued*[7],
And given to Lartius and to Marcius battle :
I saw our party to their trenches driven,
And then I came away.

Com. Though thou speak'st truth,
Methinks[8] thou speak'st not well. How long is't since?

Mess. Above an hour, my lord.

Com. 'Tis not a mile ; *briefly*[9] we heard their drums :
How couldst thou in a mile *confound*[10] an hour,
And bring thy news so late ?

Mess. Spies of the Volsces
Held me in chase, that I was forced to wheel
Three or four miles about, *else*[11] had I, sir,
Half an hour since brought my report.

Com. Who's *yonder*[12],
That does appear as he were *flay'd*[13] ? O gods !
He has the stamp of Marcius ; and I have
Before-time seen him thus.

Mar. [*Within.*] Come I too late ?

1. retreating.
2. intervals
3. winds carrying the sounds of the battle.
4. guide them to success.
5. armies.
6. sacrifices n gratitude for your favour.
7. come out
8. I think.
9. a short time ago.
10. waste.
11. otherwise.
12. there.
13. stripped of the skin ; severely flogged.

an untenable position nor can be called cowardly because of our retreat. Believe me, gentlemen, we shall be attacked again. During the time we were engaged in fighting, we heard, at intervals and by means of the wind blowing in this direction, the sound of our friends attacking the enemy. May the Roman gods guide our friends to such success as we wish for ourselves, so that both our armies can meet each other with smiling faces and can offer to the gods sacrifices in gratitude for their favour !

Enter a Messenger.

What news have you brought ?

Messenger. The people of Corioli rushed out of the city and fought against the soldiers of Lartius and Marcius. I saw our soldiers being pushed back to their trenches and then I came away.

Cominius. Although you are giving us correct news, I think that you are not giving us good news. How long ago did this happen ?

Marcius. More than an hour ago, my lord.

Cominius. Why, the distance between the forces of Lartius and Marcius and my forces is hardly a mile, as we know by hearing their drums only a few minutes ago. How could you waste full one hour in covering a distance of one mile and bring your news so late ?

Martius. The Volscian spies kept pursuing me so that I had to make a circuit of three or four miles. Otherwise, sir, I would have brought my news half an hour ago.

(Marcius *is seen approaching*.)

Cominius. Who is there ? It seems as if he has been heavily chastised. (It seems as if he has been stripped of his skin.) O gods ! He has the look and appearance of Marcius ; and I have seen him in this condition on earlier occasions.

Marcius. Have I come too late ?

Com. The shepherd knows not thunder from a *tabor*[1]
More than I know the sound of Marcius' tongue
From every meaner man.

Enter MARCIUS

Mar. Come I too late ?

Com. Ay, if you come not in the blood of others,
But *mantled in*[2] your own.

Mar. O, let me *clip ye*[3]
In arms as sound as when I *woo'd*[4], in heart
As merry as when our *nuptial day*[5] was done,
And *tapers*[6] burn'd *to bedward*[7] !

Com. Flower of warriors,
How is't with Titus Lartius ?

Mar. As with a man busied about decrees :
Condemning some to death and some to exile ;
Ransoming[8] him, or pitying, threatening the other ;
Holding Corioli in the name of Rome,
Even like a *fawning*[9] greyhound in the leash,
To let him slip at will.

Com. Where is that slave
Which told me they had beat you to your trenches ?
Where is he ? call him *hither*[10].

Mar. Let him alone ;
He did inform the truth : but for our gentlemen,
The *common file*[11] — *a plague*[12] ! tribunes for them !
The mouse ne'er *shunn'd*[13] the cat as they did budge

1. small drum.
2. covered (as with a cloak)
3. embrace you.
4. made love.
5. wedding-day.
6. candles.
7. towards the bed.
8. releasing after receiving a sum of money.
9. eager.
10. here.
11. common soldiers.
12. curse them.
13. avoided.

Cominius. I can distinguish the voice of Marcius from the voice of every man inferior to him more quickly than a shepherd can distinguish the sound of thunder from the sound of a small drum.

Marcius. Have I come too late ?

Cominius. Yes, if the blood with which you are covered, as by a cloak, is your own and not that drawn from your enemies.

Marcius. O, let me embrace you with arms as full of vigour as when I made love, and with a heart as joyful as it was when the day of my wedding drew to its close and the lighted candles were being carried to escort me to the marriage bed.

Cominius. O hero of heroes !—How is Titus Lartius getting on ? (How do things fare with Titus Lartius ?)

Marcius. He is busy making decisions and proclaiming them. He is ordering some of the enemies to be hanged and some to be banished. He is accepting a ransom from one, setting another free out of mere pity, and threatening another. He holds Corioli as a possession of Rome, just like a game-keeper with an eager hound in the leash, holding the hound back or letting him go in pursuit of the game just as he pleases. (He has Corioli as much in command as a game-keeper who is in full command of a hound.)

Cominius. Where is that wretched liar who told me that the enemies had driven you back to your trenches ? Where is he ? Call him here.

Marcius. Do not bother him. He gave you correct information. The rank and file of our army deserve to be cursed. They demanded tribunes to protect their rights but they are surely a contemptible lot. They showed a greater fear of the enemy soldiers who were actually much inferior to them, than a mouse shows of the cat. (A mouse does not

From rascals worse than they.

Com. But how prevail'd you ?

Mar. Will the time serve to tell ? I do not think.
Where is the enemy ? are you lords o' the field ?
If not, why cease you till you are so ?

Com. Marcius,
We have at disadvantage fought and did
Retire to win our purpose.

Mar. How lies the *battle*[1] ? know you on which side
They have placed their men of trust ?

Com. As I guess, Marcius,
Their bands i' the *vaward*[2] are the Antiates,
Of their best trust ; o'er them Aufidius,
Their very heart of hope.

Mar. I do *beseech you*[3],
By all the battles wherein we have fought,
By the blood we have shed together, by the vows
We have made to endure friends, that you directly
Set me against Aufidius and his Antiates ;
And that you not delay the present, but,
Filling the air with swords *advanced*[4] and darts,
We *prove*[5] this very hour.

Com. Though I could wish
You were conducted to a gentle bath
And *balms*[6] applied to you, yet dare I never
Deny your asking : take your choice of those
That best can aid your *action*[7].

1. army.
2. vanguard.
3. pray you.
4. drawn.
5. put to test.
6. ointment.
7. campaign.

run away from a cat more quickly than our soldiers did when attacked by enemy soldiers who were actually much inferior to them.)

Cominius. But how then did you win your victory?

Marcius. I do not think that I have the time to tell you. Where is the enemy? Are you victorious over your enemy? If not, why have you stopped fighting?

Cominius. Marcius, we have suffered a set-back and were compelled to withdraw in order to achieve our purpose.

Marcius. What is their strategy? What is the disposition of the enemy forces? Do you know on which side they have stationed their most trustworthy soldiers?

Cominius. So far as I can guess, their forward soldiers are those who come from the city of Antium. They are the soldiers who enjoy the greatest confidence of the commanders. Those soldiers are led by Aufidius who is the very centre of their hope.

Marcius. I do appeal to you, in the name of all the battles in which we have fought, in the name of the blood we have shed together, in the name of the vows we have taken to maintain our friendship, that you straight-away set me to fight against Aufidius and his soldiers from Antium, and that, without any further delay, you take this opportunity of attacking the enemy and filling the air with drawn swords and arrows, so that we may put matters to the test at once and see what this hour will bring us.

Cominius. Although I should be better pleased if I could prevail upon you to refresh yourself with a bath and to allow your wounds to be dressed with ointment, yet I never venture to refuse you anything you ask. Choose the soldiers who can best help you in your enterprise.

Mar. Those are they
That most are willing. If any such be here—
As it were sin to doubt—that love this *painting*[1]
Wherein you see me *smear'd*[2] ; if any fear
Lesser his person than an *ill report*[3] ;
If any think brave death outweighs bad life
And that this country's dearer than himself ;
Let him alone, or so many so minded,
Wave thus, to express his *disposi ion*[4],
And follow Marcius.

[*They all shout and wave their swords, take him up in their arms, and cast up their caps.*]

O, me alone ? make you a sword of me ?
If these shows be not outward, which of you
But is four Volsces ? none of you but is
Able to bear against the great Aufidius
A shield as hard as his. A certain number,
Though thanks to all, must I select from all : the rest
Shall bear the business in some other fight,
As cause will be obey'd. Please you to march ;
And four shall quickly draw out my command,
Which men are best inclined.

Com. March on, my fellows :
Make good[5] *this ostentation*[6], and you shall
Divide in all with us. [*Exeunt.*

1. blood.
2. covered.
3. reproach of cowardice.
4. inclination.
5. prove.
6. this show (of bravery.)

Marcius. Those can help me best are the ones who have the greatest determination to do so. (It is eagerness and determination that make the best supporters.) There are such soldiers, and it would be a sin to doubt that there are such. If there are any who take pleasure in bloodshed ; if there are any who are more afraid of being called cowards than afraid of any personal danger ; if there are any who think a brave death preferable to a contemptible life ; if there are any who hold their country's welfare dearer than their own safety; let such alone, or others of this category, declare by waving their swords, as I do, that they possess the above qualities. Let such persons only follow me.

[*They all shout and wave their swords ; they take him up in their arms and throw up their caps.*]

Marcius. Do you, by thus raising me in your arms, brandish me as if I were your sword ? If this is not a mere outward show, there is not one of you who is not the equal of at least four Volscians. Everyone of you is capable of showing himself the equal of the great Aufidius in wielding the weapons of war and in valour. Although I am thankful to all of you, yet I must select a certain number for my purpose. The rest shall have full opportunity of fighting another day, according as the occasion may demand. Please march on. I shall depute four of you to choose quickly the soldiers who are most eager for this duty and whom I shall command.

Cominius. March on, my fellows. You must prove that this display of valour is not a mere display but the expression of reality. You shall have an equal share with us in the harvest that we reap.

(*They leave*)

SCENE VII

The gates of Corioli.

[TITUS LARTIUS, *having set a guard upon Corioli, going with drum and trumpet toward* COMINIUS *and* CAIUS MARCIUS, *enters with a* Lieutenant, *other* Soldiers, *and a* Scout.]

Lart. So, let the *ports*[1] be guarded : keep your duties,
As I have set them down. If I do send, dispatch
Those *centuries*[2] to our aid ; the rest will serve
For a *short holding*[3]: if we lose the *field*[4],
We cannot keep the town.

Lieu. Fear not our care, sir.

Lart. Hence[5], and shut your gates *upon's*[6].
Our guider, come ; to the Roman camp conduct us.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VIII

A field of battle.

[*Alarum as in battle. Enter, from opposite sides,* MARCIUS *and* AUFIDIUS.]

Mar. I'll fight with none but thee ; for I do hate thee
Worse than a promise-breaker.

Auf. We hate alike :
Not Afric owns a serpent I *abhor*[7]
More than thy fame and envy. Fix thy foot.

Mar. Let *the first budger*[8] die the other's slave,
And the gods *doom*[9] him after !

Auf. If I fly, Marcius,
Holloa me[10] like a hare.

Mar. Within these three hours, Tullus,

1. gates.
2. bands of a hundred soldiers each.
3. holding the city for a short period.
4. battle.
5. away from here.
6. upon us; behind us.
7. hate.
8. the first to flinch.
9. damn.
10. chase me with cries.

ACT I SCENE VII

Before the gates of Corioli

[Titus Lartius *having set a guard upon* *Corioli, going with drum and trumpet toward* Cominius *and* Caius Marcius, *enters with a* Lieutenant, *other* soldiers, *and a* Scout.]

Lartius. Very well ; let the gates be guarded. Stick to your duties in accordance with my instructions. If you receive a message from me to send more troops to me, then send those bands of a hundred men each to help us. Those left (after you have sent me additional troops) will be enough to hold the city for a short period.

Lieutenant. Do not doubt our being fully alert, sir.

Lartius. We shall now march away. You shut the gates behind us. Our guide, come ; lead us to the Roman camp. (*They leave*)

ACT I SCENE VIII

A field of battle

[The beating of drums *as in battle. Enter* Marcius *and* Aufidius *from opposite sides.*]

Marcius. I will fight with no other but you, because I hate you more than I hate a promise-breaker.

Aufidius. Your hatred for me cannot be greater than mine for you. In the whole of Africa there is not a snake whom I hate more than I begrudge you your fame. Plant your foot and get ready to fight.

Marcius. He who flinches first shall become the life-long slave of the other and let the curse of the gods descend upon him.

Aufidius. If I run away, Marcius, chase me with shouts, like hunters chasing a hare.

Marcius. Hardly three hours ago, Tullus, I

Alone I fought in your Corioli walls,
And made what work I pleased : 'tis not my blood
Wherein thou seest me *mask'd*[1], for thy revenge
Wrench up thy power to the highest.

Auf. Wert thou the *Hector*[2]
That was the whip of *your bragg'd*[3] *progeny*[4],
Thou shouldst not 'scape me here.

[*They fight, and certain* Volsces *come in the aid of* AUFIDIUS. MARCIUS *fights till they be driven in breathless.*

Officious[5], and not *valiant*[6], you have *shamed*[7] me
In your *condemned seconds*[8]. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IX

The Roman camp.

[*Flourish. Alarum*[9]. *A retreat is sounded. Flourish. Enter, from one side,* COMINIUS *with the* Romans ; *from the other side,* MARCIUS, *with his arm in a scarf.*]

Com. If I should tell thee o'er this thy day's work,
Thou'ldst[10] not believe thy deeds : but I'll report it
Where senators shall mingle tears with smiles,
Where great *patricians*[11] shall attend and shrug,
I' the end *admire*[12], where ladies shall be *frighted*[13],
And, *gladly quaked*[14], hear more ; where the dull tribunes,
That, with the *fusty*[15] *plebeians*[16], hate thine honours,
Shall say against their hearts, "We thank the gods

1. covered.
2. an ancient Trojan hero.
3. of which you boast.
4. race ; ancestry.
5. obtrusive.
6. brave
7. disgraced.
8. accursed support.
9. call to arms.
10. you would.
11. nobles.
12. wonder.
13. frightened.
14. enjoyed the sensation of fear.
15. foul-smelling.
16. commoners.

fought alone inside the walls of your city Corioli, and swept everything before me. You see me covered with blood, but it is not my own blood. If you wish to take your revenge upon me, strain your efforts to the utmost.

Aufidius. You cannot now escape my fury, even if you were as fierce as Hector who inflicted severe punishment upon the enemy and of whom you are so proud as an ancestor of yours.

[*Here they fight, and certain Volscians come in to the aid of Aufidius. Marcius fights till they are driven away breathless.*]

Aufidius. I can only curse you for rendering me this help. You have disgraced me and, instead of proving your own valour, you have only shown yourselves as meddlers in what does not concern you.

ACT I SCENE IX

The Roman Camp

[*Flourish. Alarum. A retreat is sounded. Enter, from one side,* Cominius *with the* Romans ; *from the other side,* Marcius, *with his arm in a scarf*]

Cominius. If I give you an account of your achievement today, you will not believe your deeds ; but I will report it in the Senate-house where the account shall be received with mingled grief and joy, where the great patricians (=nobles), listening to the account, will at first shrug their shoulders in disbelief, but will in the end give you due applause ; where ladies shall be frightened by my account and, enjoying the sensation of being frightened, will be eager for more details of the same kind ; where the stupid tribunes who, like the foul-smelling common people, hate the honours paid to you, shall say, in opposition to their real feelings, "We are thankful to the gods that our Rome has such a brave

Our Rome hath such a soldier."
Yet camest thou to a morsel of this feast,
Having fully dined before.

[*Enter* TITUS LARTIUS, *with his power, from the pursuit.*]

Lart. O general,
Here is the *steed*[1], *we the caparison*[2] :
Hadst thou *beheld*[3]—

Mar. Pray now, no more : my mother,
Who has *a character*[4] to *extol*[5] her blood,
When she does praise me grieves me. I have done
As you have done ; that's what I can ; induced
As you have been ; that's for my country :
He that has but effected his good will
Hath overta'en mine act.

Com. You shall not be
The grave of your deserving ; Rome must know
The value of her own : 'twere a concealment
Worse than a theft, no less than a *traducement*[6],
To hide your doings ; and to silence that,
Which, to the spire and top of praises vouch'd,
Would seem but modst : therefore, I *beseech you*[7]—
In sign of what you are, not to reward
What you have done—before our army hear me.

Mar. I have some wounds upon me, and they smart
To hear themselves remembered.

Com. Should they not,
Well might they *fester*[8] 'gainst ingratitude,

1. horse.
2. we, the mere trappings.
3. seen.
4. the right
5. praise.
6. defamation ; slander.
7. pray you.
8. be filled with puss.

soldier as Marcius." Yet, in coming to take your share with us in the fighting here, you came like one who, having fully feasted, is still unsatisfied and wants more, however small the quantity that he can obtain.

[*Enter* Titus Lartius *with his force, from the pursuit.*]

Lartius. O, general, Marcius has done all the fighting ; our part in the business has been merely a show. Had you seen—

Marcius. I pray you, do not talk any more of that. When my mother praises me, I feel upset (or hurt) even though she has the right to praise her offspring. I have done, as you all have done, that of which we are capable. I have been prompted, as you have been, by the desire to serve our country. He, who has with determination carried out his task, has placed himself on an equal footing with me. (Or, He who has determinedly carried out his task has done more than I have. for I have not done all that I wished to do.)

Cominius. You shall not be allowed in this way to bury your great deeds and let them be forgotten. Rome must know the value of her own children like you. To hide your exploits would be something worse than robbing you of what is due to you ; it would be a slander on you. We would be defaming you if we hush in silence that which to proclaim even to the highest point and degree of praise would seem sheer modesty. Therefore, I pray you to let me proclaim before the army what my estimate of you is. Let me do so not as a reward for your exploits but as an indication of what we think you to be.

Marcius. I have received some wounds and, when you remind me of them by talking about my exploits, the wounds will hurt me more.

Cominius. But the case would be worse if your wounds are not mentioned, because then they will

And *tent*[1] themselves with death. Of all the horses,
Whereof we have ta'en *good*[2] and *good store*[3], of all
The treasure in this field achieved and city,
We render you the tenth, to be ta'en forth,
Before the common distribution, at
Your only choice.

Mar. I thank you, general;
But cannot make my heart consent to take
A bribe to pay my sword: I do refuse it;
And stand upon my common part with those
That have *beheld*[4] *the doing*[5].

[*A long flourish. They all cry* "Marcius! Marcius!" *cast up their caps and lances:* COMINIUS *and* LARTIUS *stand bare.*

Mar. May these same instruments, which you *profane*[6],
Never sound more! when drums and trumpets shall
I' the field prove flatterers, let courts and cities be
Made all of *false-faced*[7] *soothing*[8]!
When steel grows soft as the *parasite's*[9] silk,
Let him be made a *coverture*[10] for the wars!
No more, I say!
For that I have not wash'd my nose that bled,
Or foil'd some *debile*[11] wretch,—which, without note,
Here's many else have done,—you shout me forth
In acclamations *hyperbolical*[12];
As if I loved my little should be dieted

1. probe.
2. valuable.
3. plentiful.
4. seen.
5. th eperformance.
6. misuse; pollute.
7. hypocritical.
8. flattery.
9. hanger-on.
10. protective covering.
11. feeble.
12. extravagant.

have good reason to fester in anger at ingratitude, and to probe themselves with mortal violence. Of all the horses—of which we have taken valuable ones and in a large number—and of all the treasure that has been won in this field and in the city, we offer to you one-tenth, which you are free to choose entirely at your will before the distribution to the army in general is made.

Marcius. I thank you, general. But I cannot persuade myself to accept a bride for my fighting. I do decline your offer and claim to share equally with those who were present at the action even if they had no part in it.

(*A prolonged beating of drums and blowing of trumpets. They all cry, "Marcius ! Marcius !" and they throw up their caps and lances in joy.* Cominius *and* Lartius *stand bare-headed*)

Marcius. May these drums and trumpets which you insult by using them wrongly (for the purpose of proclaiming my triumph), never be allowed to sound again ! When drums and trumpets shall be employed in war for the purpose of flattery, we may well expect that the courts and cities will be made up of cringing hypocrisy and nothing else ! When steel grows soft as the silken garments of the fawning hangers- on of rich men, let silk be used as a protection in battle. (Or, If you are going to degrade the drums and trumpets of war in this way, let me never hear them again ! When drums and trumpets come to be used for flattery, let nothing but hypocrisy and sycophancy be found in courts and cities ! And when steel grows soft as the silken garments of the hangers-on of rich people, let silk be used as armour in battle !) Let me have no more of such flattery, I say. Just because I have not stopped in the thick of the battle to wash my nose when it bled, or have got the better of some puny fellow, which some others here have done without having been noticed, you shout your praise of me in very extravagant terms, as if I were fond

In praises sauced with lies.

Com. Too modest are you ;
More cruel to your good report than grateful
To us that give you truly : by your patience,
If 'gainst yourself you be *incensed*[1], we'll put you,
Like one that means his proper harm, in *manacles*[2],
Then reason safely with you. Therefore, be it known,
As to us, to all the world, that Caius Marcius
Wears this war's garland : in token of the which,
My noble steed, known to the camp, I give him,
With all his *trim belonging*[3] ; and from this time,
For what he did before Corioli, call him,
With all the applause and clamour of the *host*[4],
CAIUS MARCIUS CORIOLANUS ! Bear
The *addition*[5] nobly ever !

[*Flourish. Trumpets sound, and drums.*

Caius Marcius Coriolanus !

Cor. I will go wash ;
And when my face is fair, you shall perceive
Whether I blush or no : *howbeit*[6], I thank you.
I mean to *stride*[7] your steed, and at all times
To *undercrest*[8] your *good addition*[9]
To the fairness of my power.

Com. So, to our tent ;
Where, ere we do *repose*[10] us, we will write
To Rome of our success. You, Titus Lartius,
Must to Corioli back : send us to Rome
The best, with whom we may *articulate*[11],
For their own good and ours.

Lart. I shall, my lord.

1. enraged.
2. fetters.
3. fine trappings.
4. army.
5. title.
6. however.
7. ride.
8. wear it as a crest.
9. excellent title.
10. rest.
11. negotiate

of having my poor merits fed upon praises embellished with gross exaggeration.

Cominius. You are too modest. You are more unkind to your good reputation than thankful to us who praise you rightly. With your permission, if you are enraged with yourself, we will put you (like one that intends to do some injury to himself) in chains, and then argue with you regarding your exploits because then there will no fear of your doing any injury to yourself. Therefore, may the whole world know what we know, namely, that Caius Marcius has won the chief glory of this war. In token of that, I give to him my noble horse, which is known to the whole army, with all its nice trappings ; and from this time, in recognition of his brave fighting before Corioli we shall call him, "Caius Marcius Coriolanus," my words being echoed by the loud and enthusiastic applause of the whole army. Let him use the title "Coriolanus" nobly and for ever !

(*Beating of drums and blowing of trumpets*)

All. Caius Marcius Coriolanus !

Coriolanus. I will go and wash myself ; and when my face is no longer soiled with blood and dirt, you shall be able to see whether I blush at your praise of me or not. However it be, I offer you my thanks. I propose to ride the horse you have given me, and at all times I will, so far as I am able to, wear worthily as a distinctive badge the title which you have conferred upon me.

Cominius. Well, I will retire to my tent where before lying down for rest, I will write a letter informing Rome of our victory. You, Titus Lartius, must go back to Corioli. Send the chief men of Corioli to us at Rome so that we may enter into negotiations with them for their own welfare as well as ours.

Lartius. I shall do so, my lord.

Cor. The gods begin to mock me. I, that now
Refused most princely gifts, am bound to beg
Of my lord general.

Com. Take't ; 'tis yours What is't ?

Cor. I *sometime*[1] lay here in Corioli
At a poor man's house ; he used me kindly :
He cried to me ; I saw him prisoner ;
But then Aufidius was within my view,
And wrath o'erwhelm'd my pity : I request you
To give my poor *host*[12] freedom.

Com. O, well begg'd !
Were he the butcher of my son, he should
Be free as is the wind. Deliver him, Titus.

Lart. Marcius, his name ?

Cor. By *Jupiter*[3] ! forgot
I am weary : *yea*[4], my memory is tired.
Have we no wine here ?

Com. Go we to our tent :
The blood upon your *visage*[5] dries ; 'tis time
It should be look'd to : come. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE X

The camp of the Volsces.

[*A flourish*[6]. *Cornets*[7]. *Enter* TULLUS AUFIDIUS. *bloody, with two or three* Soldiers]

Auf. The town is ta'en !

First Sol. 'Twill be delivered back on good condition.

Auf. Condition !
I *would*[8] I were a Roman ; for I cannot,

1. for some time.
2. the man whose guest I was.
3. chief god of the Romans.
4. yes.
5. face.
6. blowing of a trumpet.
7. blowing of the wind-instruments.
8. wish.

Coriolanus. The gods begin to make fun of me. I, who refused highly precious gifts from you a little while ago now feel compelled to ask a favour of you, my lord general.

Cominius. The favour is already granted to you. What is your demand ?

Coriolanus. For a time I found shelter in Corioli at the house of a poor man. He treated me kindly. He shouted to me fo- help when he was being carried off as a prisoner by the Roman soldiers. But at that moment Aufidius was within my sight. My anger against Aufidius overcame the pity I felt for this poor man. I request you to release this poor man who treated me hospitably.

Cominius. O, a noble request ! Even if this man had been the killer of my son, he would have been released at your request and he would find himself as free as the wind. Set him free, Titus.

Lartius. Marcius, what is the name of this man ?

Coriolanus. By Jupiter, I have forgotten it. I am tired ; yes my memory is tired. Is there no wine here ?

Cominius. Let us retire to our camp. The blood from the wound on your face is getting clotted. It is time that this wound was attended to. Let us go. (*They leave*)

ACT I SCENE X

The Volscian Camp.

[*The blowing of a trumpet. Enter* Tullus Aufidius *bleeding, with two or three* Soldiers.]

Aufidius. The town has been captured !

First soldier. It will be restored to us on fair terms.

Aufidius. Terms ! I wish I were a Roman ; because as a Volscian compelled to submit to terms I lose my proud independence. Terms ! How can the

Being a Volsce, be that I am. Condition !
What good condition can a treaty find
I' the part that is at mercy ? Five times, Marcius,
I have fought with thee ; so often hast thou *beat*[1] me,
And wouldst do so, I think, should we *encounter*[2]
As often as we eat. By the elements,
If e'er again I meet him beard to beard,
He's mine, or I am his : mine *emulation*[3]
Hath not that honour in't it had ; for where
I thought to crush him in an equal force,
True sword to sword, I'll *potch*[4] at him some way
Or *wrath*[5] or *craft*[6] may get him.

First Sol. He's the devil.

Auf. Bolder, though not so *subtle*[7]. My valour's poison'd
With only suffering *stain*[8] by him ; for him
Shall fly out of itself : nor sleep nor *sanctuary*[9],
Being naked, sick, nor *fane*[10] nor Capitol,
The prayers of priests nor times of sacrifice,
Embarquements all of fury[11], shall lift up
Their rotten privilege and custom 'gainst
My hate to Marcius : where I find him, were it
At home, upon my brother's guard, even there,
Against *the hospitable canon*[12], would I
Wash my fierce hand *in's heart*[13]. Go you to the city ;
Learn how 'tis held ; and what they are that must
Be *hostages*[14] for Rome.

1. defeated.
2. fight
3. rivalry.
4. thrust ; poke.
5. anger.
6. cunning.
7. cunning.
8. disgrace.
9. place of refuge.
10. all of which are curbs on furry.
11. laws of hospitality.
12. in his blood.
13. prisoners retained by the enemy.

defeated side, which is at the mercy of the victors, obtain a favourable treaty ? (We have been defeated and are at the mercy of the Romans. How, then, can we expect a settlement by which we shall be properly treated ?) Five times, Marcius, I have fought against you and five times you have defeated me. And you would defeat me, I think, even if we were to fight as often as we eat. I swear by the elements, if ever again I meet Marcius face to face, one or other of us shall perish. My rivalry with him is no longer of that honourable nature it once was ; because previously I hoped to crush him in fair and open fight, and meet him in a hand-to-hand battle, while now I will seek his life by all possible means, whether by my fury or by cunning ; (while now I will seek his life just as eagerly by secret assassination as by open combat.)

First soldier. Marcius is the devil himself.

Aufidius. He is even more daring than the devil, though he is not so cunning. My valour has lost its healthy character merely because it has been eclipsed by his superiority ; and on his account my valour shall give up its natural character. Whether he is sleeping, whether he has taken refuge in a temple, whether he is naked or ill, whether he is engaged in worship or in public duties in the Capitol, whether the priests plead on his behalf, whether the time is such as to render the act of murder doubly sinful—none of these reasons, which would otherwise restrain my fury, will have the power to assert their antiquated, though established and recognised, force against the hatred which I feel for Marcius. Wherever I find him, even if he were at my home under the very protection of my own brother, I will satisfy my fierce enmity by killing him even though such an action would be against the code of hospitality. You go to the city ; find out which troops hold possession of it, and also the names and ranks of those of our men who are being taken away to Rome as hostages.

First Sol. Will not you go?

Auf. I am attended at the cypress grove: I pray you—
'Tis south the city mills—bring me word thither
How the world goes, that to the pace of it
I may spur on my journey.

First Sol. I shall, sir. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II, SCENE I

Rome. A public place.

[*Enter* MENENIUS, *with the two Tribunes of the people,* SICINIUS *and* BRUTUS.]

Men. The *augurer*[1] tells me we shall have news to-night.

Bru. Good or bad?

Men. Not according to the prayer of the people, for they love not Marcius.

Sic. Nature teaches beasts to know their friends.

Men. Pray you, *who*[2] does the wolf love?

Sic. The lamb.

Men. Ay, to devour him; as the hungry *plebeians*[3] would the noble Marcius.

Bru. He's a lamb indeed, that baes like a bear.

Men. He's a bear indeed, that lives like a lamb. You two are old men: tell me one thing that I shall ask you.

1. priest who interpreted the will of gods.

2. whom.

3. commoners.

First Soldier. Will you not go ?

Aufidius. I am expected by some friends who are waiting for me at the cypress grove. You will find me to the South of the mills which supply the city with corn. I pray you to bring me information there how matters stand, so that I may adjust myself to the circumstances.

First Soldier. I shall, sir. (*They depart*)

ACT II, SCENE I

Rome—A public place

(*Enter* Menenius, *with the two* Tribunes *of the people,* Sicinius *and* Brutus.)

Menenius. The soothsayer tells me that we shall receive some news tonight.

Brutus. Shall we receive good news or bad ?

Menenius. The news will not suit the wishes of the common people, because they have no love for Marcius.

Sicinius. Nature teaches even the wild beasts to know and love their friends (and, therefore, Nature will teach the common people to realise that Marcius is their benefactor.)

Menenius. Pray you, tell me if you believe that the wolf can love any one.

Sicinius. Yes, the wolf loves the lamb.

Menenius. Yes, the wolf loves the lamb only to eat him up and in the same way the hungry commoners would like to murder the noble Marcius.

Brutus. Marcius is a lamb indeed, though his cry is like the growl of a bear, not like the bleating of a lamb.

Menenius. He is a bear indeed, but he leads as peaceful and harmless a life as a lamb. You two (the two Tribunes) are old men. Tell me one thing that I am about to ask you.

Both. Well, sir.

Men. In what *enormity*[1] is Marcius poor in, that you two have not in abundance?

Bru. He's poor in no one fault, but *stored with*[2] all.

Sic. Especially in pride.

Bru. And *topping*[3] all others in boasting.

Men. This is strange now: do you two know how you are *censured*[4] here in the city, I mean of us o' the *right-hand file*[5]? do you?

Both. Why, how are we censured?

Men. Because you talk of pride now,—will you not be angry?

Both. Well, well, sir, well.

Men. Why, 'tis no great matter; for a very little thief of occasion will rob you of a great deal of patience: give your dispositions *the reins*[6], and be angry at your pleasures; at the least, if you take it as a pleasure to you in being so. You blame Marcius for being proud?

Bru. We do it not alone, sir.

Men. I know you can do very little alone; for your helps are many, or else your actions would grow wondrous *single*[7]: your abilities are too infant-like for doing much alone. You talk of pride: O that you could turn your eyes toward the napes of your necks,

1. serious fault.
2. richly endowed with.
3. exceeding.
4. estimated.
5. aristocracy.
6. loosen the reins.
7. (a) one (b) foolish

Both. Well sir.

Menenius. Is there any great fault of which Marcius has a small share and of which you two do not have plenty ?

Brutus. There is no single fault of which Marcius has only a small share. Indeed, he has an abundance of all the faults.

Sicinius. He has an abundance especially of pride.

Brutus. And his boastfulness exceeds all his other faults.

Menenius. What you say is strange to me. Do you know what estimate of you is held in the city, I mean what estimate of you we, the nobles or the aristocrats, have ? Do you know ?

Both. Why, tell us that estimate.

Menenius. As you were just speaking of pride, will you not be angry on account of what I am about to say ?

Both. All right, all right. Now speak, sir, without keeping us in suspense.

Menenius. Do not be so impatient, because it is not a very important matter ; though it is obvious that the smallest provocation is enough to exhaust your patience pretty well. Give a free outlet to your inclinations, and be angry as you please. I say "as angry as you please" if it be a pleasure to you to be angry. You accuse Marcius of being proud ?

Brutus. We are not the only persons who accuse him of pride, sir.

Menenius. I know you can do very little without support from others. There are many who support you ; otherwise your actions would be absolutely isolated from the actions of others ; (otherwise your actions would seem perfectly silly.) Your abilities are too immature and un-developed for you to do anything without support from others. You talk

and make but an interior survey of your good selves ! O that you could !

Bru. What then, sir ?

Men. Why, then you should discover a *brace*[1] of *unmeriting*[2], proud, violent, *testy*[3] magistrates, *alias*[4] fools, as any in Rome.

Sic. Menenius, you are known well enough too.

Men. I am known to be a *humorous*[5] *patrician*[6], and one that loves a cup of hot wine with not a drop of allaying *Tiber*[7] in't ; said to be something imperfect in favouring the first complaint ; hasty and *tinder-*[8] like upon *too trivial motion*[9] ; one that converses more with the buttock of the night than with the forehead of the morning : what I think I utter, and spend my *malice*[10] in my breath. Meeting two such *wealsmen*[11] as you are—I cannot call you *Lycurguses*[12]—if the drink you give me *touch my palate adversely*[13], I make a crooked face at it. I can't say your worships have delivered the matter well, when I find *the ass*[14] *in compound with*[15] the major part of your syllables : and though I must be content to bear with those that say you are reverend grave men, yet they lie deadly that tell you you have good faces. If you see this in the *map of my microcosm*[16], follows it that I am known well enough too ? what harm can your *bisson*[17] *conspectuities*[18] glean out of his character, if I be known well enough too ?

Bru. Come, sir, come, we know you well enough.

1. pair.
2. undeserving.
3. head-strong.
4. namely.
5. light-hearted.
6. nobleman.
7. water from the river Tiber
8. spark.
9. too small provocation.
10. ill-will.
11. custodians of public welfare.
12. wise-men like Lycurgus.
13. irritate me.
14. stupidity
15. mixed with.
16. my face.
17. nearly blind.
18. visions.

of pride. I wish that you could turn your eyes behind your backs and see all the faults that lie within your "good" selves! I really wish you could.

Both. What would we find if we were to do so?

Menenius. Then you will find that you are a pair of worthless, proud, bullying, irritable magistrates or, I might say, fools, as any in Rome.

Sicinius. Menenius, people also know quite well what kind of a man you are.

Menenius. I am known to be a light-hearted noble-man and one that loves a cup of hot wine with not a drop of water to dilute it. I am commonly reported to have the fault of deciding in the favour of the first complainant without waiting to hear the other side. I am said to be rash and excitable over even the smallest provocation. I am one who goes to bed late at night rather than gets up early in the morning. I make no secret of my thoughts and though I am quick to lose my temper yet I forget my anger immediately. You two are very careful guardians of the public welfare! I wish I could say that you are as wise as Lycurgus (the famous Spartan lawgiver), but I cannot compare you with him. If the language you use in speaking to me irritates me, I cannot help showing my irritation. I cannot say that your honours have spoken wisely, when I find the mark of the ass so prominent in most of your conversation. And though I must tolerate those who say that you two are highly respectable and serious-minded men, yet they who tell you that you are honest men tell a terrible lie. If my description of what I am is obvious to you from my face, does it follow that I, like you, am well-known to everyone? Further, if I too am known well enough, what is there in this character of mine that your nearly blind vision can discern as being objectionable?

Brutus. Come sir, come. It is no good talking in this way. We know well enough what kind of a man you are.

Men. You know neither me, yourselves, nor any thing. You are ambitious for poor knaves' caps and legs : you *wear out*[1] a good wholesome forenoon in hearing a cause between an orange-wife and a *fosset-seller*[2], and then *rejourn*[3] the controversy of three pence to a second day of audience. When you are hearing a matter between party and party, if you chance to be pinched with the colic, you make faces like *mummers*[4], *set up the bloody flag*[5] against all patience ; and dismiss the controversy bleeding, the more entangled by your hearing : all the peace you make in their cause is, calling both the parties knaves. You are a pair of strange ones.

1. spend.
2. seller of trifles.
3. adjourn.
4. buffoons.
5. declare war.

Bru. Come, come, you are well understood to be a perfecter *giber*[6] for the table than a necessary *bencher*[7] in the Capitol.

6. mocker ; witty talker.
7. occupant of a seat of justice.

Men. Our very priests must become mockers, if they shall encounter such ridiculous subjects as you are. When you speak best unto the purpose, it is not worth the wagging of your beards ; and your beards deserve not so honourable a grave as to stuff a *botcher's*[8] cushion, or to be entombed in an *ass's pack-saddle*[9]. Yet you must be saying, Marcius is proud ; who, *in a cheap estimation*[10], is worth al l your predecessors *since Deucalion*[11], though peradventure

8. patcher of old clothes.
9. saddle packed with goods which an ass must carry.
10. to say the least of it.
11. since the great Flood.

Menenius. You know neither me nor yourselves nor anything. What you desire is that poor fellows should take off their caps and should bow low before you. You waste the whole afternoon, which might be utilised more profitably, in hearing a dispute between an orange-selling woman and a seller of trifles, and then postpone the decision to the next day whereas any sensible man would settle such a petty dispute in five minutes. When you are hearing a dispute between one party and another, if you happen to suffer from colic, you make faces like buffoons, you declare war against all patience, and you send the litigants away without settling their dispute so that the litigants find themselves in a state of still greater confusion in consequence of your foolish intervention. The only show you make of adjusting the differences between the two parties consists in your scolding both the parties. You are a pair of strange fellows.

Brutus. Come, come, ; everyone knows that you have a much better right to sit at a dinner table, where your witty remarks are welcomed, than to sit on a bench of justice, where your decisions are laughed at. (Everyone knows that you are better at providing entertainment at the dinner-table than at dispensing justice in the Capitol.)

Menenius. Even our priests, who are expected to maintain solemn faces, will be unable to resist laughing when they come across such absurd fellows as you are. Even when your remarks are most pertinent, they provide no reason for the solemn wagging of your beards (that is, even your pertinent remarks are nothing to be proud of.) And your beards do not have merit enough even to serve as the padding for the seat of a cobbler or for the saddle of that beast of burden, the donkey. Yet, you fellows cannot restrain yourselves from saying that Marcius is proud, Marcius who, to value him at the lowest possible figure, is equal in worth to all your ances-

some of the best of 'em were hereditary hangmen. *God-den*[1] to your worships : more of your conversation would infect my brain, being the herdsmen of the beastly *plebeians*[2]: I will be bold to take my leave of you. [BRUTUS *and* SICINIUS *go aside.*

1. God give you good evening.
2. commoners.

[*Enter* VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, *and* VALERIA.]

How now, my as fair as noble ladies,—and the moon, were she earthly, no nobler,—*whither*[3] do you follow your eyes so fast ?

3. where.

Vol. Honourable Menenius, my boy Marcius approaches ; for the love of *Juno*[4], let's go.

4. queen of heaven and earth.

Men. Ha ! Marcius coming home !

Vol. Ay, worthy Menenius ; and with most *prosperous approbation*[5].

5. covered with glory won through success in war.

Men. Take my cap, *Jupiter*[6], and I thank thee. Hoo ! Marcius coming home !

6. chief Roman god.

Vol. Vir. Nay, 'tis true.

Vol. Look, here's a letter from him : the state hath another, his wife another ; and, I think, there's one at home for you.

Men. I will make my very house *reel*[7] to-night : a letter for me !

7. feel intoxicated.

Vir. Yes, certain, there's a letter for you : I saw't

tors since the time of the Flood ; and, as for the worth of your ancestors, some of the best of them perhaps held no better a position than that of hereditary hangmen. Good evening to your honours ; more talk from you will drive me mad, you being merely the leaders of the commoners who are no better than beasts. I will now venture to take my leave of you. (*Brutus and Sicinius move aside*).

Enter Volumnia, Virgilia *and* Valeria.

Menenius. What is it, my fair and noble ladies, noble as the moon if the moon were among earthly things, what makes you look with such eager eyes towards something which you are expecting ?

Volumnia. Honourable Menenius, my son Marcius is coming ; for the love of Juno, let us go to meet him. (*Juno*—queen of heaven and earth).

Menenius. Is that so ? Is Marcius returning home ?

Volumnia. Yes, worthy Menenius, he is returning home, and returning home covered with glory on account of his success.

Menenius. (*throwing his cap into the air.*) Take my cap, Jupiter, and take my gratitude also. Hurrah ! Marcius is returning home ! [*Jupiter*—king of heaven and earth.)

Virgilia.
Volumnia } But it is quite true.

Volumnia. Look here. This is a letter from him. He has also written a letter to the Senate and another to his wife ; and, I think, there may be a letter from him for you also awaiting you at your house.

Menenius. I will drink to Marcius's health tonight till the very house becomes intoxicated. Is there a letter for me also ?

Virgilia. Yes, surely, there is a letter for you ; I saw it.

Men. A letter for me ! it gives me ***an estate of seven years' health***[1] ; in which time I will ***make a lip at the***[2] physician : the most sovereign prescription in ***Galen***[3] is but ***empiricutic***[4], and, to this preservative, of no better report than a ***horse-drench***[5]. Is he not wounded ? he was wont to come home wounded.

1. long lease of good health.
2. laugh at the.
3. a famous physician.
4. bogus.
5. medicine for horses.

Vir. O, no, no, no.

Vol. O, he is wounded ; I thank the gods for't.

Men. So do I too, if it be not too much : brings a' victory in his pocket ? the wounds ***become***[6] him.

6. adorn.

Vol. On's brows : Menenius, he comes the third time home with the oaken garland.

Men. Has he ***disciplined***[7] Aufidius soundly ?

7. beaten.

Vol. Titus Lartius writes, they fought together, but Aufidius got off.

Men. And 'twas time for him too, I'll warrant him that : an he had stayed by him, I would not have been so ***fidiused***[8] for all the chests in Corioli, and the gold that's in them. Is the senate ***possessed***[9] of this ?

8. beaten.
9. informed.

Vol. Good ladies, let's go. Yes, yes, yes ; the senate has letters from the general, wherein he gives my son the whole name of the war : he hath in this action ***outdone***[10] his former deeds doubly.

10. surpassed.

Menenius. A letter for me ! This news gives me a long lease of good health, during which time I will become scornful of doctors. The most efficacious medicine prescribed by the famous physician, Galen, would be a fake as compared to the medicinal effect of this news. Indeed, Galen's prescription would not be worth more than bran-mash (which is administered to horses) as compared to this health-giving news. Is Marcius not wounded ? He used always to return wounded from war.

Virgilia. O, no, no, no.

Volumnia. O, he is wounded and I thank the gods that he is wounded (as a result of his brave fighting.)

Menenius. I join you in thanking the gods for it provided his wounds are not serious. He will look better with the wounds because he carries a victory in his pocket.

Volumnia. Not in his pocket, but on his forehead. It is the third time that he is coming home with a garland of oak-leaves on his fore-head (as a token of his victory.)

Menenius. Has he given a severe thrashing to Aufidius ?

Volumnia. Titus Lartius has written that Marcius and Aufidius did have a fight but that Aufidius escaped.

Menenius. And it is well for Aufidius that he escaped, I can surely say. If Aufidius had continued to fight, he would have received a punishment which I am not prepared to take even if all the boxes containing gold in Corioli were offered to me. Has the Senate been informed of this ?

Volumnia. Good ladies let us go. Yes, yes, yes ; the Senate has received letters from the general who has given the whole credit for the victory to my son Marcius in this battle has greatly exceeded his valour in previous battles.

Val. *In troth*[1], there's wondrous things spoke of him.

Men. Wondrous ! ay, I warrant you, and not without his true *purchasing*[2].

Vir. The gods grant them true !

Vol. True ! *pow, wow.*[3]

Men. True ! I'll be sworn they are true. Where is he wounded ? [*To the* Tribunes] God save your good worships ! Marcius is coming home : he has more cause to be proud. Where is he wounded ?

Vol. I' the shoulder and i' the left arm : there will be large *cicatrices*[4] to show the people, when he shall stand for his place. He received in the *repulse*[5] of Tarquin seven hurts i' the body.

Men. One i' the neck, and two i' the thigh,—there's nine that I know.

Vol. He had, before this last expedition, twenty-five wounds upon him.

Men. Now it's twenty-seven : every *gash*[6] was an enemy's grave. [*A shout and flourish.*] *Hark*[7] ! the trumpets.

Vol. These are the *ushers*[8] of Marcius : before him he carries noise, and behind him he leaves tears :

1. in truth.
2. deserving.
3. pooh, pooh.
4. scars.
5. defeat.
6. wound.
7. listen.
8. announcers ; heralds.

Valeria. In truth wonderful tributes have been paid to him.

Menenius. Wonderful! Yes, I assure you that he has really deserved those tributes.

Virgilia. May the gods prove those tributes well-deserved!

Volumnia. What nonsense! Of course, he truly deserves the tributes.

Menenius. I can swear that he really deserves the tributes. In what part of the body has he been wounded? (*To the Tribunes*) God save your honours! Marcius is coming home. A little while ago you were commenting on his pride; now there is more reason for him to feel proud. (*To the ladies*) In which part of the body is he wounded?

Volumnia. He is wounded in the shoulder and in the left arm. He will have large scars to show to the people when he stands for the consulship which he expects to obtain. He received seven wounds in his body when he fought against, and defeated, Tarquinius Superbus.

Menenius. He received one wound in the neck and two in the thigh. As far as I know he received nine wounds in all on that occasion.

Volumnia. Before he undertook this last expedition against the Volscians, he had twenty-five wounds on his body.

Menenius. Now the number of wounds on his body is twenty-seven, and for every wound he received he must have killed an enemy soldier. (*A shout and the sounding of a trumpet*) Listen! The trumpets are sounding.

Volumnia. These trumpets are the usual signs of Marcius's approach. (These trumpets announce the approach of Marcius.) There is shouting and the sounding of trumpets before him, while behind him he leaves the enemies shedding tears over their

Death, that dark spirit, *in's nervy arm*[1] doth lie ;
Which, being advanced, declines, and then men die.

[*A sennet. Trumpets sound. Enter* COMINIUS *the general, and* TITUS LARTIUS ; *between them* CORIOLANUS, *crowned with an oaken garland*[2] ; *with* Captains *and* Soldiers, *and a* Herald.]

Her. Know, Rome, that all alone Marcius did fight
Within Corioli gates : where he hath won,
With fame, a name to Caius Marcius ; these
In honour follows Coriolanus.
Welcome to Rome, *renowned*[3] Coriolanus ! [*Flourish.*

All. Welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus !
Cor. No more of this ; it does offend my heart :
Pray now, no more.

Com. Look, sir, your mother !
Cor. O,
You have, I know, *petition'd*[4] all the gods
For my prosperity ! [*Kneels.*
Vol. Nay, my good soldier, up
My gentle Marcius, worthy Caius, and
By *deed-achieving honour*[5] newly named,—
What is it ?—Coriolanus must I call thee ?—
But, O, thy wife !

Cor. My *gracious silence*[6], *hail*[7] !
Wouldst thou have laugh'd had I come *coffin'd*[8] home
That weep'st to see me triumph ? Ah, my dear,

1. in his muscular arm.
2. garland of victory.
3. famous.
4. prayed to.
5. honour achieved through deeds.
6. lovely silent person
7. geetings; health to you.
8. as a dead body.

defeat and their losses. That dark spirit, namely, Death, lies in the strong arm of Marcius. He has only to lift his hand and then, as it falls, men die.

(*A particular note is sounded on the trumpet. The blowing of trumpets. Enter* Cominius, *the general, and* Titus Lartius ; *between them is* Coriolanus, *crowned with a garland made of the leaves of an oak tree. Accompanying them are* Captains *and* soldiers *and an* announcer.)

Announcer. Let the people of Rome know that Marcius fought single handed within the gates of Corioli. As a result of his fighting, he has won fame and, in addition to fame, he has earned an honourable title to be used after his name. The title is "Coriolanus" which will be used after his name, "Caius Marcius". Welcome to Rome, famous Coriolanus ! (*Sounding of trumpets*)

All. Welcome to Rome, famous Coriolanus !

Coriolanus. No more of this applause. It displeases my heart. I appeal to you to give me no more applause.

Cominius. Look, sir, there is your mother.

Coriolanus. O my mother, I know that you have been praying to all the gods for my success in the wars. (*Kneels before his mother*.)

Volumnia. No, do not kneel, my good soldier. Rise, my son, so gentle to me and so well worthy of the race to which you belong. By virtue of the honour which you have won with your brave deeds, you have earned a new title What is it ? Must I call you 'Coriolanus' ? But see, here is your wife to welcome you.

Coriolanus. My lovely silent wife ! I wish health to you. You are weeping at my return in triumph. Does that mean that you would have laughed if I had been brought home dead ? Ah, my dear, tears are being shed in Corioli by women who have lost

Such eyes the widows in Corioli wear,
And mothers that lack sons.

Men. Now, the gods crown thee !

Cor. And live you yet ? [*To* VALERIA] O my sweet lady, pardon.

Vol. I know not where to turn : O, welcome home:
And welcome, general : and ye're welcome all.

Men. A hundred thousand welcomes. I could weep
And I could laugh, I am *light*[1] and *heavy*[2]. Welcome.
A curse begin at very root on's heart,
That is not glad to see thee ! You are three
That Rome should dote on : yet, by the faith of men,
We have some old crab-trees here at home that will not
Be grafted *to your relish*[3]. Yet welcome, warriors :
We call a *nettle*[4] but a nettle and
The faults of fools but folly.

Com. Ever right.

Cor. Menenius, ever, ever.

Herald. Give way there, and go on !

Cor. [*To* VOLUMNIA *and* VIRGILIA] Your hand, and yours :
Ere in our own house I do shade my head,
The good *patricians*[5] must be visited ;
From whom I have received not only greetings,
But with them *change of honours*[6].

Vol. I have lived

1. cheerful.
2. sad.
3. to your taste.
4. thorn.
5. nobles.
6. variety of honours.

their husbands and by women who have lost their sons in the war. (Why should *you* shed tears ?)

Menenius. Now may the gods crown you !

Coriolanus. And are you still alive ? (*to Valeria*) My sweet lady, excuse me for not having greeted you earlier.

Volumnia. There are so many whom I would wish to welcome and I hardly know whom to welcome first. O, welcome home, ; welcome general ; and you are all welcome.

Menenius. A hundred thousand welcomes. I am in a mood in which I feel like both weeping and laughing. I feel joyous to see those who have returned and I am sad because of those countrymen who have not returned from the war. Welcome. If there is any one not glad to see you returning safe, may a curse descend upon his heart from its very bottom and destroy it altogether ! You are the three men of whom the Romans should feel extremely fond ; yet assuredly there are among us here certain sour-tempered old fellows that will not feel pleased with you or be in sympathy with you, but never mind them, warriors. You are most welcome. We do not trouble ourselves to be angry with a nettle which stings us nor do we use strong language about the faults of fools. We accept their nature for what it is.

Cominius. Menenius always speaks rightly.

Coriolanus. Yes, Menenius is always the same good-humoured old man.

Announcer. Clear the way and move on.

Coriolanus. (*To Volumnia and Virgilia.*) Give me your hand ; you also give me your hand. Before I enter my own house for rest and shelter, I must pay a visit to the good nobles from whom I have received not only their greetings but also a number of different honours.

Volumnia. I have lived long enough to see my

To see *inherited*[1] my very wishes
And the *buildings of my fancy*[2] : only
There's one thing wanting which I doubt not but
Our Rome will *cast upon thee*[3].

Cor. Know, good mother.
I had rather be their servant in my way,
Than *sway*[4] with them in theirs.

Com. On, to the Capitol !

[*Flourish. Cornets. Exeunt in state, as before.* BRUTUS *and* SICINIUS *come* forward.]

Bru. All tongues speak of him, and the *bleared sights*[5]
Are spectacled to see him : your prattling nurse
Into a rapture lets her baby cry
While she chats of him : the kitchen *malkin*[6] pins
Her richest *lockram*[7] 'bout her *reechy*[8] neck,
Clambering the walls to eye him : stalls, *bulks*[9], windows,
Are smother'd up, leads fill'd and ridges horsed
With variable *complexions*[10], all agreeing
In earnestness to see him : *seld-shown*[11] *flamens*[12]
Do press among the popular throngs, and puff
To win a vulgar station : our veil'd dames
Commit the war of white and damask in
Their *nicely-gawded*[13] cheeks to the wanton spoil
Of *Phoebus'*[14] burning kisses : such a *pother*[15]

1. possessed ; enjoyed.
2. castles in the air.
3. eagerly offer to you.
4. govern.
5. dim-sighted eyes.
6. kitchen-maid.
7. cheap linen.
8. covered with smoke.
9. stalls outside shops.
10. characters.
11. seldom shown.
12. priests.
13. carefully adorned.
14. god of sun.
15. excitement.

dearest wishes granted and to see the castles I built in the air become actual realities. There is now only one thing wanted. I have no doubt that Rome will willingly offer you what I have in mind (namely, the consulship).

Coriolanus. Good mother, I want you to know that I would rather serve Rome in my own way than rule Rome in accordance with the notions which the people of Rome have.

Cominius. Move on to the Capitol.

(*Sounding of trumpets and blowing of cornets. All walk away with great dignity just as they had appeared before.* Brutus *and* Sicinius *come forward*).

Brutus. Everybody in Rome is speaking highly of Marcius. The dim-sighted old men have put on their spectacles to take a look at him. The talkative nurses gossip about him with so much interest that they ignore the babies who cry and scream wildly for their attention. The kitchen-maid decks herself out in her best and, putting on her finest kerchief round her smoke-covered neck, climbs up the walls to see him. Sheds outside shops, frame-works projecting from shop-fronts, and windows are so crowded as to be completely hidden. The lead-roofed tops of houses are filled with men. The wedge-roofs are bestridden with people of different natures and temperaments but all having the same earnest desire to see Marcius. Even priests who rarely appear in public are bustling about in the multitude of the common people and are breathless with their exertions to find a standing-place such as those occupied by ordinary spectators. Our high-born ladies are usually very careful in protecting from sun-light their carefully-beautified cheeks in which the pure white and brilliant crimson seem to be struggling for supremacy. But now in their excitement the same ladies are exposing those cheeks to the unscrupulous plunder of the burning sun. (That is, those ladies risk ruining their complexions by

As if that whatsoever god who leads him
Were *slily*[1] crept into his human powers
And gave him graceful posture.

Sic. On the sudden,
I *warrant him*[2] consul.

Bru. Then our office may,
During his power, go sleep.

Sic. He cannot *temperately*[3] *transport*[4] his honours
From where he should begin and end, but will
Lose those he hath won.

Bru. In that there's comfort.

Sic. Doubt not
The commoners, for whom we stand, but they
Upon their ancient malice will forget
With the least cause these his new honours, which
That he will give them make I as little question
As he is proud to do't.

Bru. I heard him swear,
Were he to stand for consul, never would he
Appear i' the market-place nor on him put
The *napless vesture of humility*[5] ;
Nor, showing, as the manner is, his wounds
To the people, beg their *stinking*[6] breaths.

Sic. 'Tis right.

Bru. It was his word : O, he would miss it rather
Than carry it but by the suit of the gentry to him

1. cunningly.
2. can surely say that he will become.
3. moderately.
4. carry.
5. thread-bare tunic indicative of humility
6. foul.

going about in the sun without veils.) It seems as if that god, whoever it be that attends him through life, had cunningly entered the human body of Marcius and given him every grace of look and movement.

Sicinius. I have no doubt that (carried away by enthusiasm at his exploits) they will, on the spur of the moment, elect him to the consulship.

Brutus. If that happens, then, as long as he remains the consul, we shall have to stop functioning.

Sicinius. It will be impossible for a man of his nature to bear from first to last the honours showered upon him, without becoming so arrogant as to lose all those honours ultimately.

Brutus. That is surely a source of consolation.

Sicinius. You may rest assured that the common people, whom we represent, prompted by their former illwill against him, will, if the least cause be given, speedily forget that they have conferred these new honours upon him. That he will give them such cause is as certain to my mind as the fact that his pride would enjoy doing so.

Brutus. I heard him swear that if he were to stand as a candidate for consulship, he would never present himself in the forum to canvass for votes nor wear the threadbare tunic worn by candidates to show that they humbly seek the approval of the voters. He has also sworn not to show, as is customary, his wounds to the people in order to seek their votes and to get the support of those who, in his opinion, have foul breaths.

Sicinius. It is right.

Brutus. That is what he said. O, he would rather lose the consulship than accept it unless the gentry appeal to him to accept the honour and unless the nobles express a similar desire. (So far from stooping to seek favour and support from others, he

And the desire of the nobles.

Sic. I wish no better
Than have him ***hold***[1] that purpose and to put it
In execution.

Bru. 'Tis most *like*[2] he will.

Sic. It shall be to him then as our good wills,
A sure destruction.

Bru. So it must fall out
To him or our authorities. For an end,
We must suggest the people in what hatred
He *still*[3] hath held them; that to's power he would
Have made them mules, silenced their pleaders, and
Dispropertied[1] their freedoms, holding them,
In human action and capacity,
Of no more soul nor fitness for the world
Than camels in the war, who have their *provand*[5]
Only for bearing burdens, and sore blows
For sinking under them.

Sic. This, as you say, suggested
At some time when his soaring insolence
Shall touch the people—which time shall not want,
If he be *put upon't*[6]; and that's as easy
As to set dogs on sheep—will be his fire
To kindle their dry stubble; and their blaze
Shall *darken him*[7] for ever.

[*Enter a* Messenger.]

Bru. What's the matter?

Mess. You are sent for to the Capitol. 'Tis thought
That Marcius shall be consul:

1. stick to.
2. likely.
3. always.
4. taken away.
5. provisions.
6. instigated.
7. obscure his glory.

would desire to be entreated by the gentry and the nobles to accept the consulship.)

Sicinius. Nothing could be more in keeping with my wishes than that he should persist in such a determination and carry it into action.

Brutus. It is most probable that he will.

Sicinius. Such a procedure on his part, like our efforts in the same direction, will be sure to ruin him.

Brutus. Either he must come to ruin or our authority will come to an end. As a means to give effect to our object we must put it into the minds of the people the fact that he has always held them in contempt. So far as his authority permitted, he would have treated the common people as the lowest kind of beasts of burden ; he would have crushed their supporters and advocates ; he would have deprived them of their rights and privileges, regarding them, so far as concerns any capacity to act like men, as having no more intelligence or practical capacity than camels, who are used in war, who are supplied with food only to enable them to carry burdens, and who are cruelly beaten when they collapse under those burdens.

Sicinius. Such a suggestion as this should be made at a time when his increasing arrogance shall irritate the people, and such a time will surely come if he be instigated to a display of his arrogance. And it will be as easy so to instigate him as to set dogs to worry sheep. His arrogance will be the spark to put the common people on fire with anger. The anger of the people is as ready to take fire as dry stubble, and their fire will for ever darken his glory.

(*Enter a* Messenger.)

Brutus. What is the matter ?

Messenger. You have been summoned to the Capitol. It is believed that Marcius is sure to be

I have seen the dumb men *throng*[1] to see him and
The blind to hear him speak : matrons flung gloves,
Ladies and maids their scarfs and handkerchers,
Upon him as he pass'd : the nobles bended,
As to *Jove's statue*[2] and the commons made
A shower and thunder with their caps and shouts :
I never saw the like.

Bru. *Let's to*[3] the Capitol ;
And carry with us ears and eyes for the time,
But hearts for the event.

Sic. *Have with you*[4].

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II

The same. The Capitol.

[*Enter two* Officers, *to lay cushions.*]

First Off. Come, come, they are almost here. How many stand for consulships ?

Sec. Off. Three, they say : but 'tis thought of every one Coriolanus will *carry it*[5].

First Off. That's a brave fellow ; but he's *vengeance proud*[6], and loves not the common people.

Sec. Off. Faith[7], there have been many great men that have flattered the people, who ne'er loved them ; and there be many that they have loved, they know not *wherefore*[8], so that, if they love they know not why, they hate upon no better a ground : therefore, for Coriolanus neither to care whether they love or hate him *manifests*[9] the true knowledge he has *in their*

1. crowd.
2. statue of the chief god.
3. let us go to.
4. I am coming with you.
5. win the election.
6. terribly proud.
7. assuredly.
8. for what reason.
9. reveals.

elected consul. I have seen the dumb men crowding to see him and blind men crowding to listen to his words. Elderly women threw their gloves at him to show their favour. Ladies and maids threw scarfs and handkerchiefs at him as he passed, to show their admiration for him. The nobles bowed to him as they bow to the statue of Jove, and the common people made a shower by throwing up their caps and produced a thunderous noise with their shouts. I have never seen such a sight before.

Brutus. Let us go to the Capitol ; and let us keep our ears and eyes alert, with courage ready to act as the situation may demand.

Sicinius. Yes, let us do so. (*They go*)

ACT II SCENE II

The same—The Capitol.

(*Enter two* Officers, *to lay cushions*.)

First Officer. Come, come, the Senators have almost arrived here. How many candidates are there for the consulship ?

Second Officer. It is said that there are three candidates ; but it is believed by everyone that Coriolanus will win the election.

First Officer. Coriolanus is a brave man ; but he is terribly proud and has no love for the common people.

Second Officer. Surely, there have been many great men who have flattered the people but who were never loved by the people ; and there have been many great men whom people have loved without being able to give any reason for their love. This means that if people can love a great man without knowing the reason for their love, they can also hate a great man without knowing the reason for their hatred. Therefore, if Coriolanus does not care whether people love or hate him, he only shows that he

disposition[1]; and out of his noble carelessness lets them plainly see't.

1. of their true character.

First Off. If he did not care whether he had their love or no, he waved indifferently 'twixt doing them neither good nor harm : but he seeks their hate with greater devotion than they can render it him ; and leaves nothing undone that may fully discover him their *opposite*[2]. Now, *to seem to affect*[3] the malice and displeasure of the people is as bad as that which he dislikes, to flatter them for their love.

2. enemy.
3. to make a show of seeking.

Sec. Off. He hath deserved worthily of his country: and his *ascent*[4] is not by such easy degrees as those who, having been supple and courteous to the people, *bonneted*[5], without any further need to have them at all into their estimation and *report*[6] : but he hath so planted his honours in their eyes, and his actions in their hearts, that for their tongues to be silent, and not confess so much, were a kind of *ingrateful*[7] injury; to report otherwise were a malice that, giving itself the lie, would *pluck reproof*[8] and rebuke from every ear that heard it.

4. rise.
5. took off their caps.
6. good opinion.
7. ungrateful.
8. draw rebuke.

First Off. No more of him ; he's a worthy man : make way, they are coming.

[*A sennet*[9]. *Enter, with Lictors*[10] *before them,* COMINIUS *the consul,* MENENIUS, CORIOLANUS, SENATORS, SICINIUS, *and* BRUTUS. *The* Senators *take their places ; the* Tribunes *take their places by themselves.* CORIOLANUS *stands.*]

9. a set of notes produced from a trumpet.
10. attendants upon a consul.

has a correct knowledge of their real character. As a conseqtence of his large-heartedness, which makes him indifferent to trifles, he lets the people clearly see his mind.

First Soldier. If he did not care whether he had the people's love or no, he would have shown himself indifferent as to whether he did them good or harm; but he shows a greater desire to obtain their hatred than their desire to offer their hatred to him, and he spares no efforts to reveal himself as their enemy. Now to make a show of seeking the hatred and displeasure of the people is as bad as flattering the people to win their love, a course of action which he dislikes.

Second Officer. He has served his country well enough to deserve appreciation and honour; and his rise has not taken place by such easy degrees as in the case of those who, having been polite and gentle to the people, took off their caps to the people in solicitation, without having done anything further to win their good opinion and their respect; but he has so firmly fixed his honourable qualities before their eyes and his great actions in their hearts that it would be both unjust and ungrateful for them to remain silent and not to acknowledge his greatness. To speak ill of him would show an ill-will that would be patently unjust and would only draw condemnation and strong disapproval from everyone who hears it.

First Officer. Let us speak no more of him; he is worthy of respect and honour. Make way, the Senators are coming.

(*The blowing of a trumpet. Enter, with public officers attending upon them,* Cominius *the consul,* Menenius, Coriolanus, Senators, Sicinius. *The* Senators *take their places; the* Tribunes *take their places by themselves.* Coriolanus *stands.*]

Men. Having *determined of*[2] the Volsces and
To send for Titus Lartius, it remains,
As the main point of this our after-meeting,
To *gratify*[2] his noble service that
Hath thus stood for his country: therefore, please you,
Most reverend and grave elders, to desire
The present consul, and last general
In our well-found successes, to report
A little of that worthy work perform'd
By Caius Marcius Coriolanus, whom
We meet here both to thank and to remember
With honours like himself.

1. decided with regard to.
2. reward.

First Sen. Speak, good Cominius :
Leave nothing out for length, and make us think
Rather our *state's*[3] *defective for*[4] *requital*[5]
Than we to stretch it out. [*To the* Tribunes.] Masters o' the people,
We do request your kindest ears, and after,
Your loving *motion*[6] toward the common body,
To yield[7] what passes here.

3. resources of the state.
4. lacking in.
5. reward.
6. proposal.
7. to agree to.

Sic. We are *convented*
Upon[8] a pleasing treaty, and have hearts
Inclinable to honour and advance
The *theme*[9] of our *assembly*[10].

8. called upon to witness.
9. subject.
10. meeting or discussion.

Bru. Which the rather
We shall be *blest*[11] to do, if he remember
A *kinder value*[12] of the people than
He hath hereto prized them at.

11. happy.
12. better opinion.

Men. That's *off*[13], that's off ;
I would you rather had been silent. Please you
To hear Cominius speak ?

13. off the mark.

Menenius. Having taken a decision with regard to the Volscians and having taken the decision to summon Titus Lartius, it remains as the main object of this further meeting to reward the great services which Marcius has rendered in the defence of his country. Therefore, I request the most respected and serious-minded Senators to ask the present consul and the man, who commanded the forces in the successes we were fortunate enough to achieve over the enemy, to give to this gathering a brief account of the distinguished work accomplished by Caius Marcius whom we have met here not only to thank but to show our remembrance of his exploits by paying him the honour he has so worthily won.

First Senator. Speak, good Cominius. Leave out no detail even if your account becomes lengthy; and, by your account of his services, lead us to think that the resources of the state are inadequate to reward him and not that we are unwilling to offer him the rewards which he deserves. (*To the Tribunes*) Masters of the people, we earnestly request you to listen to us with maximum goodwill and, after hearing us, to use your most persuasive efforts with the common people in order to get their approval of our decisions.

Sicinius. The decision we have been called together to take is a pleasant one for us, and our hearts are inclined to honour and to promote the man who is the subject of our discussion at this meeting.

Brutus. To this inclination we shall be all the more ready to yield if he on his part will care to show that he holds a better opinion of the people than he has hitherto expressed.

Menenius. That has nothing to do with the matter. That is off the point. I wish you had rather remained silent. Will you be good enough to listen to what Cominius has to say?

Bru. Most willingly ;
But yet my caution was more pertinent
Than the rebuke you give it.

Men. He loves your people,
But tie him not to be their bedfellow.
Worthy Cominius, speak. [CORIOLANUS *offers to go away.*] Nay, keep your place.

First Sen. Sit, Coriolanus ; never shame to hear
What you have nobly done.

Cor. Your honours' pardon :
I had rather have my wounds to heal again
Than hear say how I got them.

Bru. Sir, I hope
My words *disbench'd*[1] you not.

Cor. No, sir : yet oft,
When blows have made me stay, I fled from words.
You *soothed*[2] not, therefore hurt not : but your people,
I love them as they *weigh*[3].

Men. Pray now, sit down.

Cor. I had rather have one scratch my head i' the sun
When the *alarum*[4] were struck than idly sit
To hear my *nothings*[5] *monster'd*[6]. [*Exit.*

Men. Masters of the people,
Your *multiplying spawn*[7] how can he flatter—
That's thousand to one good one—when you now see
He had rather venture all his limbs for honour
Than one *on's*[8] ears to hear it ? Proceed, Cominius.

1. unseated.
2. flattered.
3. deserve.
4. call to battle.
5. trifles ; unimportant actions.
6. exaggerated.
7. countless fry. (spawn—eggs of fishes.)
8. of his.

Brutus. I am most willing to listen to him ; but I insist that the warning I gave was more to the point than your condemnation of it.

Menenius. He surely loves the people whose cause you so persistently urge, but you should not expect him to become bosom-friends with them. Worthy Cominius, speak. (Coriolanus *offers to leave the meeting*.) No, keep to your seat.

First Senator. Keep sitting, Coriolanus. You should not feel ashamed to hear an account of your noble deeds.

Coriolanus. I wish to be excused by the honourable senators. I would rather receive my wounds again and go through the process of their healing than hear an account of how I received them.

Brutus. Sir, I hope you are not leaving your seat because of what I have said.

Coriolanus. No, sir. Yet, often when I refused to budge from a place of fighting, I was driven away by words of praise. You did not flatter me and therefore did not injure my feelings. But as regards the people about whom you talk so much, I love them as much as they deserve.

Menenius. Pray now, sit down.

Coriolanus. I would rather sit doing nothing in the sun with someone to scratch my head when the signal for battle was sounded than sit idly to hear an exaggerated account of my poor performances.

(*He goes away*)

Menenius. Masters of the people, how can you expect him to flatter the common people of whom-only one in a thousand is worth anything and who are good at nothing but multiplying themselves by producing children (worthless like themselves). You can see clearly that he would rather risk breaking every limb of his body in fighting honourably than expose one of his ears to the pain of listening to an account of his deeds. Proceed Cominius.

Com. I shall lack *voice*[1] ; the deeds of Coriolanus
Should not be utter'd feebly. It is held
That *valour*[2] is the chiefest virtue, and
Most dignifies the *haver* :[3] if it be
The man I speak of cannot in the world
Be singly counterpoised[4]. At sixteen years,
When Tarquin *made a head*[5] for Rome, he fought
Beyond the mark of others : our then dictator,
Whom with all praise I point at, saw him fight,
When with his *Amazonian chin*[6] he drove
The *bristled lips*[7] before him : he *bestrid*[8]
An o'er-press'd Roman and i' the consul's view
Slew three opposers : *Tarquin's self*[9] he met,
And struck him on his knee : in that day's *feats*,[10]
When he might act the woman in the scene,
He proved best man i' the field, and for his *meed*[11]
Was brow-bound with the oak. His pupil age
Man-enter'd thus he *waxed*[12] like a sea,
And in the *brunt*[13] of seventeen battles since
He lurch'd all swords of the garland. For this last,
Before and in Corioli, let me say,
I cannot speak him home : he stopp'd the fliers ;
And by his rare example made the coward
Turn terror into sport : as weeds before
A vessel under sail, so men obey'd
And fell below his [illegible] his sword, death's stamp,

1. words.
2. bravery in war.
3. possessor.
4. be equalled by any one man.
5. raised a force.
6. beardless chin.
7. lips with moustaches.
8. stood over to protect.
9. Tarquin himself.
10. brave deeds.
11. reward.
12. increased. in daring.
13. shock of attack.

Cominius. No words of mine are equal to the task (of describing the deeds of Coriolanus). The brave deeds of Coriolanus deserve to be described in vigorous language. It is believed that bravery in war is the greatest quality which ennobles its possessor more than any other good quality. If that be so, then the man I speak about cannot be equalled by any other one man in the whole world. At the age of sixteen he fought with more bravery than any other when Tarquin invaded Rome. Our ruler at that time, whom I mention with all praise, saw him fighting when, though yet a beardless young man, he drove away much older soldiers. He went to the rescue of a Roman who had been attacked by a larger number of opponents than he could singly face, and in the opinion of the consul he killed three enemies. He faced Tarquin himself in the battle and struck him a blow that brought him down on his knees. On that occasion when he was still so young that he could have shown himself as timid as a woman, he proved by his exploits that day to be the best warrior and, as a reward for his bravery, he was garlanded with oaken leaves. He, in his minority having thus enrolled himself as a grown-up man, grew limitlessly in daring and since then he has participated in seventeen battles in which he bore the shock of the attack and not only robbed all swords of the garland but carried away the garland from them without much effort. As regards this last battle fought outside Corioli and within the walls of Corioli, I must confess that I cannot describe his bravery in adequate terms of praise. He stopped his soldiers from running away from the battle-field, and by his unique example infused so much courage into those cowards that they fought bravely and found amusement in what had previously terrified them. The men obeyed him and yielded to his pressure as weeds yield before a ship going at full speed with all its sails set. His sword, which bore the stamp of death, proved fatal wherever it

Where it did mark, it took ; from face to foot
He was a thing of blood, whose every motion
Was timed with dying cries : alone he enter'd
The *mortal gate*[1] of the city, which he painted
With *shunless destiny*[2] ; aidless came off,
And with a sudden re-inforcement struck
Corioli like a planet : now all's his :
When, by and by, the din of war 'gan pierce
His *ready sense*[3] ; then straight his doubled spirit
Re-quicken'd what in flesh was *fatigate*[4],
And to the battle came he ; where he did
Run reeking o'er the lives of men, as if
'Twere a *perpetual*[5] spoil : and till we call'd
Both field and city ours, he never *stood*[6]
To ease his breast with panting.

Men. Worthy man !

First Sen. He cannot but with measure fit the honours
Which we devise him.

Com. Our *spoils*[7] he kick'd at,
And look'd upon things precious as they were
The common *muck*[8] of the world : he *covets*[9] less
Than misery itself would give ; rewards
His deeds with doing them, and is content
To spend the time to end it.

Men. He's right noble :
Let him be call'd for.

First Sen. Call Coriolanus.

1. gate where people were dying.
2. inevitable fate.
3. alert hearing.
4. weary ; tired.
5. endless.
6. paused.
7. plundered goods.
8. rubbish.
9. desires.

struck. From head to heels he looked a mass of blood and the cries of the dying enemies kept time with each movement of his (and the cries of the dying enemies were an accompaniment to every step he took, as a musical instrument accompanies singing or dancing.) All alone he entered the city gates round which death was raging. He set his bloody mark upon the city and thereby showing that it was irresistible will of destiny that the city should belong to him. Without anyone to support him, he came out of the city and then, gathering his forces made a quick assault upon Corioli and struck the city like a great disaster caused by the influence of a planet. By this time he had made himself master of Corioli. Then, by and by, the sounds of battle were heard by his sharp ears. These sounds at once renewed and strengthened his fighting spirit, put fresh life into those of his bodily powers as had become fatigued, and made him rush to the scene of fighting where he slaughtered the enemy soldiers in large numbers that it seemed as if battle-field was for him a ceaseless opportunity for killing ; and he never paused to rest till both the field and the city had fallen to us.

Menenius. Worthy man !

First Senator. Whatever the honours we propose for him, they are sure to fit him as if he had been previously measured for them.

Cominius. He rejected with contempt the booty and the plunder and treated even the most valuable things as the merest filth. He has even less desire to possess those things than the desire of the wretched people of the city to offer those things. He finds the reward for his deeds simply by doing those deeds and thinks of nothing but getting to the end of the time he has to spend in such work.

Menenius. He is right noble. Let him be sent for.

First Senator. Call Coriolanus.

Off. He doth appear.

[*Re-enter* CORIOLANUS.]

Men. The senate, Coriolanus, are well pleased
To make thee consul.

Cor. I do owe them still
My life and services.

Men. It then remains
That you do speak to the people.

Cor. I do ***beseech***[1] you,
Let me ***o'erleap***[2] that custom, for I cannot
Put on the gown, stand naked and entreat them,
For my wound's sake, to give their ***suffrage***[3] : please you
That I may ***pass***[4] this doing.

Sic. Sir, the people
Must have their ***voices***[5] ; neither will they ***bate***[6]
One ***jot***[7] of ***ceremony***[8].

Men. Put them not to't :
Pray you, go fit you to the custom and
Take to you, as your predecessors have,
Your honour with your ***form***[9].

Cor. It is a part
That I shall blush in acting, and might well
Be taken from the people.

Bru. Mark you that ?

Cor. To ***brag***[10] unto them, thus I did, and thus,
Show them the unaching scars which I should hide,
As if I had received them for the hire
Of their ***breath***[11] only !

1. pray.
2. omit.
3. vote.
4. omit.
5. votes.
6. diminish; forgo.
7. the smallest portion.
8. usual custom.
9. ceremony.
10. boast.
11. voice or vote.

Officer. He is coming.

(*Re-enter* Coriolanus.)

Menenius. Coriolanus, the members of the Senate feel happy in appointing you the consul.

Coriolanus. Even in the capacity of the consul, I shall owe to the Senate my life and my services.

Menenius. It only remains now for you to speak to the people and get their approval.

Coriolanus. I appeal to you to allow me to omit that custom, because I cannot put on the humble gown and, exposing my naked body to them, appeal to them, to give me their votes for the sake of the wounds I have suffered for their sake. If it does not offend you, I would like to omit this custom.

Sicinius. Sir, the people must be allowed their right to exercise their votes in the election. They will never consent to forego the smallest part of the established custom.

Menenius. Do not force the people to give up the usual custom. I request you to adjust yourself to the custom and, in order to obtain the honour you want, accept the form which you have to go through for that purpose, as previous consuls have done in the past.

Coriolanus. This custom is one in following which I shall feel ashamed. It is one that might well be borrowed from the people. Or, it is one that might well nave originated from the common people.

Brutus. Do you observe his attitude in this matter ?

Coriolanus. To boast of myself before them and to give them an account of my exploits ! To show them my healed wounds which actually I should conceal ! Showing them my wounds would mean that I had received the wounds only to buy their support in the election.

Men. Do not *stand*[1] upon't.
We recommend to you, tribunes of the people,
Our purpose to them : and to our noble consul
Wish we all joy and honour.

1. insist.

Senators. To Coriolanus come all joy and honour !
[*Flourish of cornets. Exeunt all but* SICINIUS *and* BRUTUS.]

Bru. You see how he intends to use the people.

Sic. May they perceive's intent ! He will *require*[2] them,
As if he did *contemn*[3] what he requested
Should be in them to give.

2. request.
3. scorn.

Bru. Come, we'll inform them
Of our proceedings here : on the market-place
I know they do attend us. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III

The same. The Forum.

[*Enter seven or eight* Citizens.]

First Cit. Once, if he do *require*[4] our voices, we ought not to deny him.

4. request.

Sec. Cit. We may, sir, if we will.

Third Cit. We have power in ourselves to do it, but it is a power that we have no power to do ; for if he show us his wounds and tell us his deeds, we are to put our tongues into those wounds and speak for them ; so, if he tells us his noble deeds, we must also tell him our noble acceptance of them. Ingratitude is *monstrous*[5], and for the multitude to be *ingrateful*[6], were to make a monster of the multitude ; of the

5. beastly ; horrible.
6. ungrateful.

Menenius. Do not be obstinate about it. Tribunes of the people, we in all kindness commit to you the duty of making known to the people our wishes in the matter ; and we wish all joy and honour to our noble consul.

Senators. May all joy and honour come to Coriolanus ! (*Blowing of trumpets. All depart except* Sicinius *and* Brutus.)

Brutus. You have learnt how Coriolanus proposes to treat the people.

Sicinius. May the people understand his intention ! He will ask them for their votes in a tone showing that he scorns them for being in a position to grant him that which he seeks from them.

Brutus. Come, we will inform them of all that has happened here. I know that they wait for us in the market place. (*They depart*)

ACT II SCENE III

The same—The Forum.

(*Enter seven or eight* Citizens.)

First Citizen. Once for all I say that, if Coriolanus requests us for our votes, we should not refuse him.

Second Citizen. We may refuse him, sir, if we so please.

Third Citizen. We certainly have the power to refuse him, but it is a power that we cannot exercise ; because if he shows us his wounds and gives us an account of his exploits, we shall be compelled to make ourselves the spokesmen of those wounds by praising the heroism through which they were gained. So, if he describes to us his exploits, it will be our duty to tell him that we are greatly impressed by them and that we appreciate them. Ingratitude is beastly, and if the multitude proves ungrateful, it means that the multitude consists of

which we being members, should bring ourselves to be monstrous members.

First Cit. And to make us no better thought of, a little help will serve ; for once we stood up about the corn, he himself stuck not to call us the many-headed multitude.

Third Cit. We have been called so of many ; not that our heads are some brown, some black, some auburn, some bald, but that our wits are so *diversely*[1] coloured : and truly I think if all our wits were to *issue out*[2] of one skull, they would fly east, west, north, south, and their consent of one direct way should be at once to all the points o' the compass.

Sec. Cit. Think you so ? Which way do you judge my wit would fly ?

Third Cit. *Nay*[3], your wit will not so soon out as another man's will : 'tis strongly *wedged up*[4] in a block-head, but if it were at liberty, 'twould, sure, southward.

Sec. Cit. Why that way ?

Third Cit. To lose itself in a fog, where being three parts melted away with rotten dews, the fourth would return for conscience' sake, to help to get thee a wife.

1. variously ; diffe-rently.
2. come out.
3. No.
4. stuck ; lodged.

beasts. We, being members of the multitude, shall be exposing ourselves to the charge of being beasts and devils.

First Citizen. And it will not require much to get us the name of devils : because as soon as we made a demand for corn he did not hesitate to call us the many-headed multitude.

Third Citizen. We have been called by that name by many others, not because our heads are of different colours, some brown, some black, some auburn, some bald, but because our wits are of various kinds and complexions. But truly I think that if all our wits were packed in a single skull and then allowed free outlet, they would fly to the four quarters of the earth (east, west, north and south), and the only agreement they would show would be to disagree as widely as the points of the compass are asunder.

Second Citizen. Do you think so ? In which direction do you think my wit would fly ?

Third Citizen. No, your wit will be slower to fly than the wit of another man. Your wit lies stuck in such a dense head that it would find an escape difficult ; but if it could obtain release, it would surely fly southward.

Second Citizen. Why southward ?

Third Citizen. Because there is plenty of fog in the south and your wit will easily get lost in the fog. Three parts of your wit will melt away because of the rotten dampness there, while the fourth part would return to you, being ashamed to leave you utterly devoid of sense. The fourth part of your wit will then look after you who are so incapable of handling your own affairs. (The fourth part of your wit will enable you to get a wife who can look after you because you yourself are incapable of handling your own affairs.)

Sec. Cit. You are never without your tricks: you may, you may.

Third Cit. Are you all resolved to give your voices? But that's no matter, the greater part carries it. I say, if he would incline to the people, there was never a worthier man.

[*Enter* CORIOLANUS *in a gown of humility,*
with MENENIUS.]

Here he comes, and in the gown of humility: *mark*[1] his behaviour. We are not to stay altogether, but to come by him where he stands, by ones, by twos, and by threes. He's to make his requests *by particulars*[2]; wherein every one of us has a single honour, in giving him our own *voices*[3] with our own tongues: therefore follow me, and I'll direct you how you shall go by him.

1. observe
2. individually and separately.
3. votes.

All. Content[4], content. [*Exeunt* Citizens.

4. agreed.

Men. O sir, you are not right: have you not known
The worthiest men have done't?

Cor. What must I say?
"I pray, sir,"—*Plague upon't*[5]! I cannot bring
My tongue *to such a pace*[6]:—"Look, sir, my wounds!
I got them in my country's service, when
Some certain of your *brethren*[7] roar'd and ran
From the noise of our own drums."

5. curse it.
6. to such a mincing manner.
7. fellow-beings.

Second Citizen. You are never without your mischievous jokes ; but never mind, you are free to enjoy your jokes at my cost.

Third Citizen. Have you all made up your mind to give your votes to Marcius ? But it does not matter whether you have so decided or not, because a bare majority will be enough to decide the election. It is my opinion that there was never a worthier man than Marcius only if he would show some sort of consideration for the people.

[*Enter* Coriolanus *in a gown of humility, with* Menenius.]

Here he comes, and he is wearing the gown of humility ; observe his behaviour. We are not to stay all of us in one group, but we should go to him one at a time or in small parties of two or three. He is to make his requests to us separately, for in that way each one has individually the honour of giving him our votes with our own tongues. Therefore, follow me, and I will instruct you how you are to approach him or pass in front of him.

All. Very well, we shall follow you.

(*Citizens depart*)

Menenius. O, sir, you are not right in trying to avoid the usual custom of requesting the people for their votes. Are you not aware that the noblest candidates for consulship have followed the custom in the past ?

Coriolanus. In what words must I make my request ? Have I to say, "I pray, sir" ? Curse it ! It is not possible for me to utter such words and adopt such a humble tone. How can I speak words like the following, 'Look at my wounds, sir. I received those wounds while fighting in the service of my country, when quite a number of your comrades only shouted in alarm and ran away in fear on hearing the sounds of our own drums."

Men. O me, the gods!
You must not speak of that: you must desire them
To think upon you.

Cor. Think upon me! hang 'em!
I would they would forget me, like the virtues
Which our *divines*[1] lose by 'em.

Men. You'll *mar*[2] all:
I'll leave you: pray you, speak to 'em, I pray you,
In wholesome manner[3]. [*Exit.*

Cor. Bid them wash their faces
And keep their teeth clean.

[*Re-enter two of the* Citizens.
So, here comes a brace.
[*Re-enter a third* Citizen.

You know the cause, sir, of my standing here.

Third Cit. We do, sir; tell us what hath brought you to't.

Cor. Mine own *desert*[4].

Sec. Cit. Your own desert.

Cor. Ay, not mine own desire.

Third Cit. How! not your own desire?

Cor. No, sir, 'twas never my desire yet to trouble the poor with begging.

Third Cit. You must think, if we give you anything, we hope to gain by you.

1. priests.

2. spoil.

3. with proper respect.

4. abilities; merits.

Menenius. O, gods, have pity on me ! Coriolanus, you must not speak to them in that way. What you have to do is to request them to give you their favourable consideration.

Coriolanus. To give me their favourable consideration ! Hang them ! I wish they would forget me just as they forget those virtues which are only wasted upon them when preached to them by our priests.

Menenius. You will spoil everything. I will now leave you I pray you to speak to them with proper respect. I pray you to do so. (*He goes away.*)

Coriolanus. Tell them to wash their faces and to keep their teeth clean (if they want me to speak to them with respect).

(*Re-enter two of the* Citizens.)

So, here comes a pair of them. (*Re-enter a third* Citizen.) Do you know the reason, sir, why I am standing here ?

Third Citizen. We do know the reason, sir ! Tell us what has made you do so.

Coriolanus. My own abilities.

Second Citizen. Your own abilities !

Coriolanus. Yes, but not my own desire.

Third Citizen. What does that mean ? Are you not standing here in accordance with your own desire ?

Coriolanus. No, sir, it has never yet been my desire to bother the poor people by seeking their votes.

Third Citizen. You must know that, if we give you anything, we shall hope for something in return from you.

Cor. Well, then, I pray, your price o' the consulship ?

First Cit. The price is to ask it kindly.

Cor. Kindly ! sir, I pray, let me *ha't*[1] : I have wounds to show you, which shall be *yours*[2] in private. Your good *voice*[3], sir ; what say you ?

1. have it.
2. shown to you.
3. vote.

Sec. Cit. You shall *ha't*[4], worthy sir.

4. have it.

Cor. A match[5], sir. There's in all two worthy voices begged. I have your *alms*[6] : *adieu*[7].

5. a bargain
6. charity.
7. farewell.

Third Cit. But this is something *odd*[8].

8. strange.

Sec. Cit. *An*[9] 'twere to give me again,—but 'tis no matter [*Exeunt the three* Citizens.

9. if.

[*Re-enter two other* Citizens.]

Cor. Pray you now, if it may *stand with the tune of*[16] your voices that I may be consul, I have here the customary gown.

10. be in accordance with the trend.

Fourth Cit. You have deserved nobly of your country, and you have not deserved nobly.

Cor. Your *enigma*[11] ?

11. riddle.

Fourth Cit. You have been a *scourge to*[12] her enemies, you have been a rod to her friends ; you have not indeed loved the common people.

12. a destroyer of.

Cor. You should *account me*[13] the more virtuous

13. consider me ; describe me as.

Coriolanus. Well, then, I pray, tell me what you want me to do in order to get your support for the consulship ?

First Citizen. What you have to do is to ask our support in a kind tone.

Coriolanus. In a kind tone ! Sir, I request you humbly to let me have your votes. I have wounds on my body to show you. But I will show them to you when we are alone. Your vote in my favour, sir ; what do you say ?

Second Citizen. You shall have it, worthy sir.

Coriolanus. It is a bargain, sir. There are in all two worthy persons who have given me their votes in response to my humble request. I have got your charity ; farewell.

Third Citizen. But this is strange behaviour on the part of Coriolanus.

Second Citizen. If only I were asked for my vote again, I would refuse to give it to him ; but it does not matter. (*The three* Citizens *leave*.)

[*Re-enter two other* Citizens.]

Coriolanus. Pray you now, if my desire to become the consul be in accord with your inclination to vote, you can see me here in the customary gown of humility.

Fourth Citizen. You have done much to deserve a rich reward from your country ; and yet you have not done much to deserve a rich reward.

Coriolanus. You have spoken in a riddle. What do you mean to say ?

First Citizen. You have been a destroyer of the enemies of your country but, at the same time, you have been very unkind to the well-wishers of your country. It is true that you have shown no love for the common people.

Coriolanus. If I have not given my love cheaply

that I have not been common in my love. I will, sir, flatter my sworn brother, the people, to earn a *dearer estimation*[1] of them ; 'tis a *condition*[2] they account gentle : and since the wisdom of their choice is rather to have my hat than my heart, I will practise the *insinuating*[3] nod and be off to them most *counterfeitly*[4] ; that is, sir, I will counterfeit the bewitchment of some popular man and give it *bountiful*[5] to the desirers. Therefore, *beseech*[6] you ,I may be consul.

1. better opinion.
2. disposition.
3. aiming at winning the favour.
4. falsely ; hypocritically.
5. plentifully.
6. pray.

Fifth Cit. We hope to find you our friend ; and therefore give you our *voices*[7] heartily.

7. votes.

Fourth Cit. You have received many wounds for your country.

Cor. I will not *seal*[8] your knowledge with showing them. I will make much of your *voices*[9], and so trouble you no further.

8. confirm.
9. votes.

Both Cit. The gods give you joy, sir, heartily !
[*Exeunt.*

Cor. Most sweet voices !

Better it is to die, better to starve,
Than *crave*[10] the *hire*[11] which first we do deserve.
Why in this woolvish *toge*[12] should I stand here,
To beg of Hob and Dick, that do appear,
Their needless *vouches*[13] ? Custom calls me to't :
What custom wills, in all things should we do't,

10. seek.
11. wages ; reward.
12. cloak.
13. testimony.

to the common people, you should give me credit for it and should consider me nobler for that reason. I will, sir, flatter the people whom I consider my sworn brothers in order to win from them a better opinion of myself. To follow that course will be to show a disposition which they consider sweet; and because they in their wisdom attach more importance to the outward show of courtesy than to genuine love, I will try to win their favour by courtly and hypocritical bows, and will take off my cap to them with the utmost pretence of respect; that is, sir, I will pretend to follow the art by which popular men fascinate the mob and will practise that art plentifully in order to please those who like that kind of thing. Therefore, I pray you to give me your votes for the consulship.

Fifth Citizen. We hope you will prove to be our friend and therefore we most willingly give you our votes.

Fourth Citizen. You have received many wounds while fighting in the service of your country.

Coriolanus. Yes, but I will not confirm your knowledge of those wounds by showing them to you. I will highly value your votes, and so bother you no further.

Both Citizens. We sincerely pray to the gods to make you successful, sir. (*They depart.*)

Coriolanus. How sweet were the voices in which the citizens spoke to me! (Coriolanus here speaks ironically.) It would be better to die, it would be better to starve to death, than humbly to seek the wages which one has already earned. Why should I stand here, wearing this woolless garment of humility, to beg every Tom, Dick and Harry who comes here, to testify to my merit for which I need no testimony. (Why should I stand here, wearing this gown of humility, like a wolf in sheep's clothing, to beg etc., etc.) It is custom that bids me do so. If

The dust on antique time would lie unswept,
And *mountainous*[1] error be too highly heapt
For truth to o'er-peer. Rather than fool it so,
Let the high office and the honour go
To one that would do thus. I am half through ;
The one part suffer'd, the other will I do.

[*Re-enter three* Citizens *more.*]

Here come *moe*[2] voices.
Your voices : for your voices I have fought ;
Watch'd for your *voices*[3] ; for your voices bear
Of wounds two dozen odd ; battles thrice six
I have seen and heard of ; for your voices have
Done many things, some less, some more : your voices :
Indeed, I would be consul.

Sixth Cit. He has done nobly, and cannot go without any honest man's voice.

Seventh Cit. Therefore let him be consul : the gods give him joy, and make him good friend to the people!

All Cit. Amen[4], amen. God save thee, noble consul ! [*Exeunt.*

Cor. Worthy voices !

[*Re-enter* MENENIUS, *with* BRUTUS *and* SICINIUS.]

Men. You have stood your *limitation*[5] ; and the tribunes
Endue[6] you with the people's voice : remains
That, in the official marks invested, you
Anon[7] do meet the senate.

1. enormous.
2. more.
3. votes.
4. be it so.
5. prescribed time.
6. invest.
7. at once.

we always do that which custom bids us do, we would be leaving the dust to accumulate on the records of old time so that its character would be forgotten, and error would reach such a height that truth would not be able to see its way on account of the obstacle. Rather than that I should play the fool in this way, I would let the honour and the high office of consulship go to him who is prepared to follow the custom in this matter ; but I have already gone through half of the ordeal ; having gone through half of it, I will go through the other half also.

(*Re-enter three* Citizens *more.*)

Here come more voters. Your votes : to obtain your votes I have fought ; to obtain your votes I have kept awake during the nights in war ; to obtain your votes I have received two dozen, perhaps a few more, wounds ; I have taken part in, or at all events heard of, eighteen battles ; to obtain your votes I have done many things, some to a lesser degree and some to a greater degree. I ask you for your votes. I am quite in earnest in wishing to be chosen consul.

Sixth Citizen. He has performed noble deeds, and has a right to get every honest man's vote.

Seventh Citizen. Therefore, let him be chosen consul. May the gods give him joy and make him a good friend of the people.

All Citizens. Be it so, be it so. May God protect you, noble consul ! (*They depart.*)

Coriolanus. Worthy voters ! (said ironically)

(*Re-enter* Menenius *with* Brutus *and* Sicinius.)

Menenius. You have stood in the forum for the prescribed time to seek votes ; and the Tribunes invest you with the people's support. What remains is that, wearing the insignia of consulship, you at once meet the Senate.

Cor. Is this done ?

Sic. The custom of request you have discharged :
The people do admit you, and are summon'd
To meet anon, *upon your approbation*[1].

Cor. Where ? at the senate-house ?

Sic. There, Coriolanus.

Cor. May I change these garments ?

Sic. You may, sir.

Cor. That I'll straight do ; and, knowing myself again,
Repair[2] to the senate-house.

Men. I'll keep you company. Will you *along*[3] ?

Bru. We stay here for the people.

Sic. Fare you well.

[*Exeunt* CORIOLANUS *and* MENENIUS

He has it now, and by his looks *methinks*[4]
Tis warm at's heart.

Bru. With a proud heart he wore his *humble weeds*[5].
Will you dismiss the people ?

[*Re-enter* Citizens.]

Sic. How now, my masters ! have you *chose*[6] this man ?

First Cit. He has our *voices*[7], sir.

Bru. We pray the gods he may deserve your loves.

Sec. Cit. *Amen*[8], sir : to my poor unworthy notice,
He mock'd us when he begg'd our voices.

1. for confirmation of choice.
2. go.
3. come along.
4. it seems to me.
5. humble garments.
6. chosen.
7. votes.
8. be it so.

Coriolanus. Is this matter completed ?

Sicinius. You have fulfilled the custom of soliciting votes from the people. The people have accepted you as consul, and you are summoned at once to meet the Senate for the confirmation of their choice.

Coriolanus. Where have I to meet the Senate ? Have I to meet them at the Senate-house ?

Sicinius. Yes, at the Senate-house, Coriolanus.

Coriolanus. May I change these clothes ?

Sicinius. You may, sir.

Coriolanus. I will change my clothes straightaway ; and after putting on my usual clothes in which I can recognise myself, I will go to the Senate-house.

Menenius. I will keep you company. Are you ready to come along ?

Brutus. We stay here to meet the people.

Sicinius. Fare you well. (Coriolanus *and* Menenius *depart.*) He has got his desire ; judging him by his looks I think that his heart is glowing with satisfaction.

Brutus. Though he prevailed upon himself to put on the clothes of a humble candidate, yet his heart remained as proud as ever. Will you dismiss the people ?

(*Re-enter* Citizens.)

Sicinius. Ho do things stand, my masters ? Have you elected this man ?

First Citizen. We have given him our votes, sir.

Brutus. We pray to the gods that he may prove himself worthy of the love you have shown him in giving him your votes.

Second Citizen. Be it so, sir. So far as a poor and humble observer like myself could judge, he made fun of us while requesting us for our votes.

Third Cit. Certainly
He *flouted us*[1] *downright*[2].

First Cit. No, 'tis his kind of speech : he did not mock us.

Sec. Cit. Not one amongst us, save yourself, but says
He used us scornfully : he should have show'd us
His marks of merit, wounds received for's country.

Sic. Why, so he did, I am sure.

Citizens. No, no ; no man saw 'em.

Third Cit. He said he had wounds, which he could show in private ;
And with his hat, thus waving it in scorn,
"I would be consul," says he : "*aged custom*[3],
But by your voices, will not so permit me ;
Your voices therefore." When we granted that,
Here was[4] "I thank you for your voices : thank you:
Your most sweet voices : now you have left your voices,
I have *no further*[5] with you." Was not this mockery ?

Sic. Why either were you ignorant to see't,
Or, seeing it, of such childish friendliness
To yield[6] your voices ?

Bru. Could you not have told him
As you were *lesson'd*[7], when he had no power,
But was a petty servant to the state,
He was your enemy, *ever spake*[8] against
Your liberties and the *charters*[9] that you bear

1. jeered at us.
2. plainly.
3. long-standing custom.
4. he said.
5. no further business.
6. to give.
7. instructed.
8. always spoke.
9. rights.

Third Citizen. Surely, he plainly jeered at us.

First Citizen. No, it is only his ordinary manner of speaking. He did not make fun of us.

Second Citizen. There is no one among us, except yourself, who does not say that he treated us contemptuously. He should have shown us the wounds which he received while fighting for his country, wounds which bear a testimony to his merit.

Sicinius. Why, he must have done that, I am sure.

Citizens. No, no. No one among us saw his wounds.

Third Citizen. He did say that he had wounds which he could show us in private. And then, thus waving his hat in a scornful manner, he said, "I wish to be elected consul. It is a long standing custom that a consul is elected by your votes. As this custom does not permit my becoming consul except with your votes, I have to seek those votes from you". When we gave him our votes he came out with the following words, "I thank you for your votes; I thank you for your most sweet votes. Now that you have given your votes to me, I have no further business with you." Was not all this mockery?

Sicinius. Why were you so stupid as not to recognise his scornful manner? Or, if you did recognise it, why were you so childishly generous as to give him your votes?

Brutus. Could you not have told him, as we had instructed you, that he was your enemy in the days when he was not the consul but was an ordinary public servant? Could you not have told him that he always spoke against your liberties and the rights that belong to you in the commonwealth of which you are the members? And could you not have told

I' the body of the *weal*[1]; and now, arriving
A place of potency and sway o' the state,
If he should still *malignantly*[2] remain
Fast foe to the *plebeii*[3], your *voices*[4] might
Be curses to yourselves? You should have said
That as his worthy deeds did claim no less
Than what he stood for, so his gracious nature
Would think upon you for your voices and
Translate his malice towards you into love,
Standing your friendly lord.

Sic. Thus to have said,
As you were *fore-advised*[5], had touch'd his spirit
And tried his inclination; from him pluck'd
Either his gracious promise, which you might
As cause had call d you up, have held him to;
Or else it would have *gall'd*[6] his *surly*[7] nature,
Which easily endures not article
Tying him to aught; so putting him to rage,
You should have ta'en the advantage of his *choler*[8]
And pass'd him unelected.

Bru. Did you perceive
He did solicit you in free contempt
When he did need your loves, and do you think
That his contempt shall not be *bruising*[9] to you
When he hath power to crush? Why, had your
bodies
No heart among you? or had you tongues to cry
Against the *rec orship*[10] of judgment?

Sic. Have you
Ere[11] now denied the asker? and now again
Of him that did not ask, but mock, bestow
Your *sued-for*[12] *tongues*[13]?

1. common-wealth.
2. maliciously.
3. commoners.
4. votes.
5. advised beforehand.
6. hurt.
7. irritable.
8. anger.
9. offensive
10. dictates
11. before.
12. sought after.
13. votes.

him that now when he has arrived at a position of power and control in the state, if he continues maliciously to be a determined enemy to the common people, your votes will prove to be curses to yourselves? You should have said that, as his heroic deeds deserve to be rewarded with nothing less than consulship, he was bound to show gentle consideration for you in return for the votes given by you and that he was bound to change his ill-will into love for you and to show himself a friend to you now that he is in a position to rule over you.

Sicinius. If you had spoken in this manner, as you had been advised before-hand, it would have served as a touchstone to judge his real attitude and would have put to test his actual intentions towards you. You would then either have extracted from him a generous promise which you could have asked him to fulfil whenever circumstances made it necessary to do so, or have offended his ill-temper which is not inclined to bind itself to any kinds of conditions. In the latter case you would have enraged him and you could have made his anger a reason for refusing to elect him.

Brutus. Did you notice that he appealed for your votes with open contempt and that at a time when your goodwill was necessary to his purpose? And do you think that his contempt shall not hurt you when he holds the power to oppress? Why, did you have no feelings to enable you to weigh your own interests? And did you vote for him with your mouths only, against all the dictates of wisdom? (Or, why did you give him your votes in opposition to the dictates of reason?)

Sicinius. Have you, on previous occasions, not refused to give your votes to anyone who asked for them? And could you now, on the other hand, offer your valuable votes, which other candidates are so ready to seek, to Marcius who did not ask for them but who mocked at them?

Third Cit. He's not confirm'd ; we may deny him yet.

Sec. Cit. And will deny him :
I'll have five hundred voices of that sound.

First Cit. I twice five hundred and their friends to piece 'em.

Bru. Get you hence instantly, and tell those friends,
They have chose a consul that will from them take
Their liberties : make them of no more voice
Than dogs that are as often beat for barking
As therefore kept to do so.

Sic. Let them assemble,
And on a safer judgment all *revoke*[1]
Your ignorant election ; enforce his pride,
And his old hate upon you : besides, forget not
With what contempt he wore the humble weed,
How in his suit he scorn'd you ; but your loves,
Thinking upon his services, took from you
The *apprehension*[2] of his present portance,
Which most *gibingly*[3], *ungravely*[4], he did fashion
After the *inveterate*[5] hate he bears you.

Bru. Lay
A fault on us, your tribunes ; that we labour'd,
No impediment between, but that you must
Cast your election on him.

Sic. Say, you chose him
More after our commandment than as guided
By your own true affections, and that your minds,
Pre-occupied with what you rather must do

1. withdraw.
2. proper appreciation or understanding.
3. mockingly.
4. without dignity.
5. hardened ; chronic.

Third Citizen. His election has not yet been confirmed. There is still time for us to refuse to elect him.

Second Citizen. And we will refuse to confirm his election. I will collect five hundred votes to support my stand.

First Citizen. I will collect a thousand more voters and their friends besides to lend further support to this stand.

Brutus. Go away quickly from here and tell those friends of yours that they have elected a consul who will snatch away their liberties from them and who will permit them no greater freedom to express their opinions than belongs to the dogs who are as often beaten for barking unnecessarily as encouraged to bark at thieves.

Sicinius. Let them assemble and after a more careful consideration withdraw your votes and nullify the choice which you have made in ignorance. Draw the pointed attention of the people to his pride and his old hatred for them. Besides, do not forget the great contempt with which he wore the gown of humility and the great scorn which he showed you even when he sought your votes ; but say that your great goodwill towards him, based upon his services to the country,prevented you from a correct judgment of his behaviour which, with great scorn, and without any dignity, was moulded by him to suit the chronic hatred which he feels for you.

Brutus. Throw blame upon us, your tribunes, and say that we exerted ourselves to the utmost, allowing nothing to stand in our way, to compel you to elect him.

Sicinius. Say that you have elected him more because of our pressure on you than because you were guided by your own real inclinations, and that your minds were so influenced by what was necessary to do under compulsion than by what was wise to do,

Than what you should, made you against the grain
To voice him consul : lay the fault on us.

Bru. Ay, spare us not. Say we read lectures to you,
How youngly he began to serve his country,
How long continued, and what *stock*[1] he springs of,
The noble house o' the Marcians, *from whence*[2] came
That Ancus Marcius, Numa's daughter's son,
Who, after great Hostilius, here was king ;
Of the same house Publius and Quintus were
That our best water brought by *conduits*[3] hither :
And [Censorinus], nobly named so.
Twice being [by the people chosen] censor,
Was his great ancestor.

Sic. One thus descended,
That hath beside well in his person *wrought*[4]
To be set high in place, we did commend
To your remembrances : but you have found,
Scaling[5] his present bearing with his past,
That he's your fixed enemy, and *revoke*[6]
Your *sudden*[7] *approbation*[8].

Bru. Say, you ne'er had done't—
Harp on that still—but by our putting on :
And presently, when you have drawn your number,
Repair[9] to the Capitol.

All. We will so : almost all
Repent in their election. [*Exeunt* Citizens.
Bru. Let them go on ;
This *mutiny*[10] were better *put in hazard*[11],
Than stay, past doubt, for greater :
If, as his nature is, he fall in rage
With their refusal, both observe and answer
The *vantage*[12] of his anger.

1. race.
2. from where.
3. water-pipes.
4. strove.
5. weighing.
6. withdraw.
7. rash.
8. support ; approval.
9. go.
10. revolt.
11. risked.
12. advantage.

that you elected him to the consulship absolutely against your wishes in the matter. Put a blame on us for compelling you to elect him.

Brutus. Yes, by all means put the blame on us. Say we delivered speeches to tutor you and that we told you how at an early age he began to serve his country, how long he continued to serve his country, and what race he comes of, the noble family of the Marcians, from whom came that Ancus Marcius, Numa's daughter's son, who, after great Hostilius, ruled here as king ; to the same family belonged Publius and Quintus to whom goes the credit for bringing here healthful water by laying down pipes ; and Censorinus, nobly so called, who was twice elected by the people as censor, was a great ancestor of Marcius.

Sicinius. Tell the people that we, the tribunes, prevailed upon you to vote for this man in view of his noble descent and in view of the fact that he himself has rendered distinguished services to the country ; but say also that you have found, after weighing his present behaviour and comparing it with his past behaviour that he is your determined enemy. In this way you can withdraw the votes which you rashly offered to him.

Brutus. Say that you would never have elected him if we had not put pressure on you. Make this point again and again, and immediately after you have got together a sufficient number of your fellows, go to the Capitol.

All. We will do so ; almost all the people feel sorry to have voted for Marcius (*Citizens depart.*)

Brutus. Let them proceed in the matter. It is better that we should at once take the risk of stirring this rebellion now than that we should wait for a greater risk which surely we shall have to face. If, as his temperament is, he feels enraged with their refusal, watch and utilise the opportunity which his anger will provide.

Sic. To the Capitol, come :
We will be there before the stream o' the people ;
And this shall seem, as partly *'tis*[1], their own,
Which we have ***goaded***[2] onward. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III SCENE I

Rome. A street.

Cornets. Enter CORIOLANUS MENENIUS, *all the Gentry,* COMINIUS, TITUS LARTIUS, *and other* Senators.

Cor. Tullus Aufidius then had *made new head*[3] ?

Lart. He had, my lord ; and that it was which caused
Our swifter *composition*[4].

Cor. So then the Volsces stand but as at first,
Ready, when time shall prompt them, *to make road*[5]
Upon's[6] again.

Com. They are worn, lord consul, so,
That we shall hardly in our ages see
Their banners wave again.

Cor. Saw you Aufidius ?

Lart. On safe-guard he came to me ; and did curse
Against the Volsces, for they had so *vilely*[7]
Yielded the town : he is retired to Antium.

Cor. Spoke he of me ?
Lart. He did, my lord.
Cor. How ? What ?
Lart. How often he had met you, sword to sword ;
That of all things upon the earth he hated
Your person most ; that he would pawn his fortunes
To *hopeless restitution*[8], so he might
Be call'd your *vanquisher*[9].

1. it is.
2. instigated ; pushed.
3. raised a fresh force.
4. coming to terms.
5. to make an attack.
6. upon us.
7. in a cowardly manner.
8. beyond all hope of recovery.
9. conquerer.

Sicinius. Let us go to the Capitol. We will be there before the crowd of people arrive there ; and this out-break, which we have encouraged, shall seem their own doing, which it partly is.

ACT III SCENE I

Rome. A Street.

Blowing of the trumpet. Enter Coriolanus, Menenius, *all the* Gentry, Cominius, Titus Lartius *and other* Senators.

Coriolanus. Tullus Aufidius then had got together a fresh force of soldiers ?

Lartius. He had, my lord ; and this was the reason which caused us to come to terms with him more speedily.

Coriolanus. So then the Volscians stand exactly as they stood at first, ready to attack us again when an opportunity shall arise.

Cominius Lord Consul, the Volscians are so exhaused by wars that we shall hardly during our life-time see them marching to the battle field again.

Coriolanus. Did you meet Aufidius ?

Lartius. He came to me on an assurance from our side that no harm would be done to him ; and he cursed the Volscians for having surrendered the city in such a cowardly manner. He has now retired to Antium

Coriolanus. Did he speak to you about me ?

Lartius. He did, my lord.

Coriolanus. What did he say ?

Lartius. He mentioned the number of times he had encountered you in battle. He said that of all things upon the earth he hated your presence the most and that he would pawn all his belongings and his wealth, beyond all hope of ever recovering them, only if he could earn the reputation of having defeatted you.

Cor. At Antium lives he ?

Lart. At Antium.

Cor. I wish I had a cause to seek him there,
To oppose his hatred fully. Welcome home.

[*Enter* SICINIUS *and* BRUTUS.]

Behold, these are the tribunes of the people,
The *tongues*[1] o' the common mouth. I do *despise*[2] them ;
For they do *prank them*[3] in authority,
Against all noble *sufferance*[4].

Sic. Pass no further.

Cor. Ha ! what is that ?

Bru. It will be dangerous to go on : no further.

Cor. What makes this change ?

Men. The matter ?

Com. Hath he not pass'd the noble and the common ?

Bru. Cominius, no.

Cor. Have I had children's voices ?

First Sen. Tribunes, give way ; he shall to the market-place.

Bru. The people are *incensed*[5] against him.

Sic. Stop
Or all will fall in *broil*[6].

Cor. Are these your herd ?
Must these have voices, that can yield them now
And straight *disclaim*[7] their tongues ? What are your offices ?
You being their *mouths*[8], why rule you not their

1. spokesmen.
2. hate.
3. dress themselves out.
4. endurance ; toleration.
5. enraged.
6. confusion.
7. withdraw.
8. spokesmen.

Coriolanus. Is he now living at Antium ?

Lartius. Yes, at Antium.

Coriolanus. I wish I had some excuse for going there and showing him that my hatred for him is as great as his for me. Lartius, you are welcome home.

(*Enter* Sicinius *and* Brutus.)

Look, these are the tribunes of the people, the spokesmen of the multitude. I really hate them because they make a parade of their authority to such an extent that nobody with any self-respect can endure them.

Sicinius. Pass no further.

Coriolanus. Ha ! what does that mean ?

Brutus. It will be dangerous to go on ; no further.

Coriolanus. What has happened to bring about this change ?

Menenius. What is the matter ?

Cominius. Has he not gone through the procedure of election both with the nobles and the commons ?

Brutus. No, Cominius.

Coriolanus. Were the votes given to me those of children not knowing their own minds ?

First Senator. Tribunes, let him pass, he shall go to the market place.

Brutus. The people are enraged with him.

Sicinius. Stop or all will be tumult and confusion.

Coriolanus. Is this the character of the common people ? Should such people have the right to vote when at one moment they give their votes to a candidate and immediately afterwards deny having given the votes ? What are your functions as tribunes ?

teeth[1] ?
Have you not set them on ?

Men. Be calm, be calm.

Cor. It is a *purposed*[2] thing, and grows by plot,
To *curb*[3] the will of the nobility :
Suffer't[4], and live with such as cannot rule
Nor ever will be ruled.

Bru. Call't not a plot :
The people cry you mock'd them, and of late,
When corn was given them *gratis*[5], you *repined*[6] ;
Scandal'd[7] the *suppliants*[8] for the people, call'd them
Time-pleasers, flatterers, foes to nobleness.

Cor. Why, this was known before.

Bru. Not to them all.

Cor. Have you inform'd them *sithence*[9] ?

Bru. How ! I inform them !

Com. You are like to do such business.

Bru. Not unlike,
Each way, to better yours.

Cor. Why then should I be consul ? By *yond*[10] clouds,
Let me deserve so ill of you, and make me
Your fellow tribune.

Sic. You show too much of that
For which the people stir : if you will pass
To where you are bound, you must inquire your way,
Which you are out of, with a gentler spirit,

1. attitude of defiance.
2. planned.
3. restrict.
4. endure it.
5 free of price.
6. regretted it.
7. defamed.
8. advocates.
9. since then.
10. yonder

When you are their spokesmen, why do you not prevent them from becoming rebellious ? Have you not instigated them against me ?

Menenius. Be calm ; do not get angry.

Coriolonus. This behaviour of the people is something planned and had its origin and growth in a conspiracy designed to defeat the will of the senators. If you endure it, you will have to live with such as have no capacity for ruling and, at the same time, will not allow others to rule them.

Brutus. Do not call it a conspiracy. The grievance of the people is that you ridiculed them and, recently, when corn was given to them free of cost, you did not approve of it. You rebuked those who pleaded on behalf of the people ; you called them time-servers, flatterers, a d enemies of nobleness.

Coriolanus. Why, all this was known to the people at the time they gave me their votes.

Brutus. No, all of them did not know it.

Coriolanus. Then did you inform them of this after the election ?

Brutus. What ! Do you think that I would go and inform them ?

Cominius. You are just the sort of person to do this kind of thing.

Brutus. It is possible, either way, to improve upon your way of doing things.

Coriolanus. If that is so, I have no right to be consul. I swear by those clouds that, if you find me deserving as ill of the state as you do, I will consent to degrade myself by becoming your fellow-tribune.

Sicinius You show too much of intolerance and it is this which caused the people to rise up in revolt against your power. If you go to where you are ready to go, you must act with much greater moderation than you now display and you must behave

Or never be so noble as a consul,
Nor *yoke with him*[1] for tribune.

Men. Let's be calm.

Com. The people are abused ; set on. This *paltering*[2]
Becomes not Rome, nor has Coriolanus
Deserved this so *dishonour'd rub*[3], laid *falsely*[4]
I' the plain way of his merit.

Cor. Tell me of corn !
This was my speech, and I will speak't again—

Men. Not now, not now.

First Sen. Not in this heat, sir, now.

Cor. Now, as I live, I will. My nobler friends,
I crave their pardons :
For the *mutable*[5], *rank-scented*[6] many, let them
Regard me as I do not flatter, and
Therein behold themselves : I say again,
In *soothing*[7] them, we nourish 'gainst our senate
The *cockle*[8] of rebellion, insolence, *sedition*[9],
Which we ourselves have plough'd for, sow'd, and scatter'd,
By mingling them with us, the honour'd number,
Who lack not virtue, no, nor power, but that
Which they have given to beggars.

Men. Well, no more.

First Sen. No more words, we *beseech*[10] you.

1. work as a colleague with him.
2. shuffling.
3. dishonourable obstacle.
4. treacherously.
5. changing.
6. foul-smelling.
7. flattering.
8. weed.
9. speaking ill of the state.
10. pray.

with gentleness, of which you have none. Otherwise you will never be so noble as a consul nor be a tribune and thus a colleague of Brutus.

Menenius. Let us calm ourselves.

Cominius. The people have been deceived ; they have been instigated to behave in this way. This shuffling does not become Rome, nor has Coriolanus done anything to deserve this disgraceful obstacle which has been laid treacherously in the path which he had cleared for himself by his merits.

Coriolanus. You remind me of what I said at the time of the distribution of corn ! Well what I said was right [and I am prepared to say it again—

Menenius. Not now, not now.

First Senator. Not in this mood of anger, sir, not now.

Coriolanus. I will say all that right now, I swear by my life. As for my nobler friends, I beg their pardon. As for the fickle (or changeable), foul-smelling mob, let them look in the mirror which I hold up to them, a mirror which does not flatter and in which they can see their real selves. I say again that by granting their demands we encourage the growth of the vile weed of rebellion, insolence, disloyalty against ourselves. We are ourselves responsible for having prepared the soil for that weed, for having sown that weed, and for having spread it by allowing the common people to mix with us who are the honourable section of the Roman population. The common people are to us what a wild weed is to wheat. We are not wanting in any virtue or any power except in so far as we have transferred these to beggars.

Menenius. Well, do not say anything more.

First Senator. We appeal to you not to say anything more.

Cor. How ! no more !
As for my country I have shed my blood,
Not fearing outward force, so shall my lungs
Coin words till their decay against those ***measles***[1],
Which we ***disdain***[2] should ***tetter***[3] us, yet sought
The very way to catch them.

Bru. You speak o' the people,
As if you were a god to punish, not
A man of their ***infirmity***[4].

Sic. 'Twere well
We let the people know't.

Men. What, what ? his ***choler***[5] ?

Cor. Choler !
Were I as patient as the midnight sleep,
By ***Jove***[6], 'twould be my mind !

Sic. It is a mind
That shall remain a poison where it is,
Not poison any further.

Cor. Shall remain !
Hear you this ***Triton***[7] of the ***minnows***[8] ? mark you
His ***absolute***[9] "shall" ?

Com. 'Twas ***from the canon***[10].

Cor. "Shall !"
O good but most unwise patricians ! why,
You grave but reckless senators, have you thus
Given ***Hydra***[11] here to choose an officer,
That with his ***peremptory***[12] "shall," being but
The horn and noise o' the monster's, wants not spirit

1. filthy rogues.
2. scorn.
3. infect.
4. weakness.
5. anger.
6. the chief god.
7. the name of a sea-god.
8. the name of a small fish.
9 imperative.
10. against the law of authority.
11. a many-headed monster.
12. imperative ; absolute.

Coriolanus. Why should I not say anything more ? I have shed my blood in the service of my country without feeling afraid of the opponents. In the same way my lungs will exhaust themselves in coining abusive words against those scabby rogues by whom we scorn to be infected but from whom at the same time we have invited infection.

Brutus. You speak about the people as if you were a god to inflict punishment and not a man having the same weaknesses which they have.

Sicinius. It would be well if we let the people know what has been said here.

Menenius. What, what ? Will you tell the people about his fit of anger ?

Coriolanus. My fit of anger ! If I were as calm as sleep in the deep stillness of midnight, by God, I would still be thinking what I have just said in what you call my fit of anger.

Sicinius. You have a mind which *shall* continue to poison itself but shall be deprived of the power of doing mischief to any other person.

Coriolanus. Shall continue ! Do you hear this fellow who thinks himself to be a lord or the governing deity of these small people who constitute the mob ? Notice his use of the authoritative and imperative word "*shall*"

Cominius. His words were such as he was not authorised to use. (His words were contrary to the law of authority.)

Coriolanus. He used the imperative (or authoritative) "*shall*" O good but most unwise noblemen ! Though you are grave in appearance, you are heedless of the mischief around you ! Why have you thus given to the many-headed multitude the power to choose a tribune who with his use of the imperative "*shall*" has the courage to say that he will compel the current of your action to run within the

To say he'll turn your current in a ditch,
And make your channel his ? If he have power
Then *vail*[1] your ignorance ; if none, awake
Your dangerous *lenity*[2]. If you are learn'd,
Be not as common fools ; if you are not,
Let them have cushions by you. You are *plebeians*[3],
If they be senators : and they are no less,
When, both your voices blended, the great'st taste
Most *palates theirs*[4]. They choose their magistrate,
And such a one as he, who puts his "shall,"
His popular "shall," against a graver bench
Than ever frown'd in Greece. By *Jove*[5] himself !
It makes the consuls base : and my soul aches
To know, when two authorities are up,
Neither supreme, how soon *confusion*[6]
May enter 'twixt the gap of both and take
The one by the other.

1. bow down.
2. mildness.
3. commoners.
4. tastes of them.
5. the chief god.
6. ruin.

Com. Well, on the market-place

Cor. Whoever gave that counsel, to give forth
The corn o' the storehouse *gratis*[7], as 'twas used
Sometime in Greece,—
Men. Well, well, no more of that.

7. free of charge.

narrow and muddy banks which he will prepare and who takes over wide limits which once belonged to you, he being no more than the noisy mouth-piece of the monstrous multitude ? If he possesses power, as he says he does, then let your ignorance which made him powerful bow down to him. If he has no power, then it is high time for you to rouse yourselves out of your mildness and dreaminess which can prove disastrous. If you are wise, then you should not behave like common fools. If you are not wise, then let the common people be allowed to sit comfortably by your side. It is you who are the common people, if such fellows as this fill the places of senators ; and they do fill those places when the voices of the senate and the common people being mixed together, the predominant taste of the mixture smacks more of the common people than of the senate. They have chosen as their tribune a man who has the daring to put his imperative "*shall*", his "*shall*" which pleases the common people against the will of a tribunal more dignified than the sternest that Greece ever had. (They have chosen as their tribune a man who dares to set his vulgar arrogance against the authority of a senate more dignified than the sternest that Greece ever had.) I swear by Jupiter himself that this man's attitude degrades the consuls and my heart feels greatl distressed to see that, when two authorities are up against each other without either of them being able to subdue the other, the forces of confusion may during the struggle over-power both of them and use both of them as instruments of each other's destruction.

Cominius. Well let us proceed to the market place.

Coriolanus. Whoever gave that advice, to distribute free of cost the corn from the State storehouse, as was the custom at one time in Greece,—

Menenius. Well, well, do not talk of that subject.

Cor: Though there the people had more absolute power,
I say, they nourish'd disobedience, fed
The ruin of the state.

Bru. Why, shall the people give
One that speaks thus their voice ?

Cor. I'll give my reasons,
More worthier than their voices. They know the corn
Was not ***our recompense***[1], resting well assured
They ne'er did service for't : being press'd to the war,
Even when ***the navel***[2] of the state was ***touch'd***[3],
They would not ***thread***[4] the gates. This kind of service
Did not deserve corn gratis. Being i' the war,
Their mutinies and revolts, wherein they show'd
Most valour, spoke not for them : the accusation
Which they have often made against the senate,
All cause unborn, could never be the native
Of our so frank donation. Well, what then ?
How shall this bosom multiplied digest
The senate's courtesy ? Let deeds express
What's like to be their words : "We did request it ;
We are the greater ***poll***[5], and in true fear
They gave us our demands." Thus we debase
The nature of our seats and make the ***rabble***[6]
Call our cares fears ; which will in time

1. reward from us.
2. centre.
3. threatened.
4. pass-through.
5. number.
6. crowd of common people.

Coriolanus. Though there (that is, in Greece) it was more excusable for the people because popular government was more developed there, I say that they (that is, those who gave the advice about the free distribution of corn) encouraged disobedience and created a situation which was certain to prove disastrous for the State.

Brutus. Why, shall the people give their votes to a man who speaks thus against their interests ?

Coriolanus. I will give my reasons for speaking thus, and my reasons are more valuable than their votes. They know that corn was not a reward given to them for anything they had done and we knew well that no service had been performed by them to deserve any reward. When the war was forced upon the country and even when the State was faced with the greatest danger, they were not ready to pass through the city gates for military service. This kind of behaviour on their part certainly did not entitle them to a free gift of corn. Although the country was involved in a war, they showed their heroism only by revolting and rebelling against the State authorities. This surely did not do any credit to them. The accusation which is without any foundation and which has so often been brought against the Senate could never prompt us to treat them so generously. Well, what then ? How is this multitude, so blinded with passion, certain to interpret the kindness shown to them by the Senate ? Let us judge from their actions what they are likely to say in this matter. They would be sure to say, "We requested the Senators to make us a free gift of corn ; and as our number is far larger than that of nobles, they granted us the gift out of mere fear and not from any noble motive." By such weak generosity, we lower the dignity of our position as rulers of the State and make it possible for the multitude to interpret our *anxiety* for their welfare as our *fear* of them. This sort of thing will in course of time encourage the mob to break open the gates of

Break ope the locks o' the senate and bring in
The crows to *peck*[1] the eagles.

Men. Come, enough.

Bru. Enough, with over-measure.

Cor. No, take more:
What may be sworn by, both divine and human,
Seal what I end withal! This *double worship*[2],
Where one part does *disdain*[3] with cause, the other
Insult without all reason; where gentry, title, wisdom,
Cannot conclude but by the yea and no
Of general ignorance,—it must omit
Real necessities, and give way the while
To unstable slightness: purpose so *barr'd*[4], it follows,
Nothing is done to purpose. Therefore, beseech you,—
You that will be less fearful than discreet,
That love the fundamental part of state
More than you doubt the change on't, that prefer
A noble life before a long, and wish
To *jump*[5] a body with a dangerous *physic*[6]
That's sure of death without it, at once pluck out
The multitudinous tongue; let them not lick
The sweet which is their poison: your dishonour
Mangles[7] true judgment and *bereaves*[8] the state
Of that integrity which should *become't*[9],
Not having the power to do the good it would,
For the ill which doth control't.

1. to attack with the beak.
2. divided power.
3. scorn.
4. obstructed.
5. expose to risk.
6. medicine
7. crushes.
8. deprives.
9. adorn it.

the Capitol and to enter the senate-hall to take to task the senators who are far superior in merit and ability to those wretched fellows.

Menenius. Come, do not talk any more in this vein.

Brutus. You have already talked enough and, in fact, a good deal more than enough.

Coriolanus. No, listen to something more that I have to say. May everything in heaven and on earth, by which people swear, give confirmation to my concluding words. This divided power and authority must necessarily ignore the real things and for the time being be content with weakness and instability. This is a state of affairs in which one party is rightly scornful, while the other party is insolent without reason ; in this state of affairs those who are high-born, those who have a high status and position and those who have wisdom, can implement no decision without the consent of the ignorant common people. All determination being thus out of the question, it follows that nothing can be done to cope with the problem. Therefore, I pray you,—such of you as consider courage to be a better policy than weak cautiousness ; such of you as more highly value the fundamental principles of the welfare of the State than fear any particular change necessary to its stability ; such of you as prefer a noble life to a long life and are ready to run a risk by administering a dangerous medicine to the State which is likely to perish without that medicine ; let such among you show the courage to silence the voice of the mob ; let the mob not be allowed to persist in a course of action which, though seemingly attractive, will prove fatal. The discredit you suffer, because of invasion upon your power, crushes your sound judgment and robs the State of that integrity of action which should be an ornament to it. You no longer have the power to do the good which your judgment dictates, because of the evil which hampers your initiative.

Bru. Has said enough.

Sic. Has spoken like a traitor, and shall *answer*[1]
As traitors do.

Cor. Thou wretch, *despite*[2] o'erwhelm thee !
What should the people do with these *bald*[3] tribunes ?
On whom depending, their obedience fails
To the greater bench : in a rebellion,
When what's not meet, but what must be, was law,
Then were they chosen : in a better hour,
Let what is meet be said it must be meet,
And throw their power i' the dust.

Bru. Manifest treason !

Sic. This a consul ? no.

Bru. The aediles, ho !

[*Enter an* Aedile.]

Let him be apprehended.

Sic. Go, call the people : [*Exit* Aedile] in whose name myself
Attach thee as a traitorous *innovator*[4],
A foe to the public *weal*[5] : obey, I charge thee,
And follow to thine answer.

Cor. Hence, old goat !

Senators, etc. We'll surety him.

Com. Aged sir, hands off.

Cor. Hence, rotten thing ! or I shall shake thy bones

1. pay the penalty.
2. contemptuous hatred.
3. old and foolish.
4. one who brings about harmful changes.
5. welfare.

Brutus. He has spoken enough and should not be allowed to say anything more.

Sicinius. He has spoken like a traitor to his country and he shall pay the penalty which traitors have to pay.

Coriolanus. You wretched fellow, may you earn over-whelming contempt and hatred! What possible good can the people obtain from such old senseless tribunes? Trusting to these fellows, the people fail to obey those higher in authority and greater in dignity. These fellows were chosen as tribunes in a state of rebellion when necessity, not the fitness of things, determined the situation. Now the situation having improved, let it be said that what is proper and fit will be applied to the circumstances of the time; and let the power of the tribunes be completely nullified.

Brutus. This is open treason.

Sicinius. Does this man speak like a consul? No.

Brutus. Officers, ho!

(*Enter an* Officer, *an assistant of the* tribunes.)

Let this man be taken into custody.

Sicinius. Go, summon the people. (Officer *goes.*) In the name of the people I myself arrest you as a traitor and as a revolutionary, and as such an enemy of the public interest. I call upon you to obey me and follow me to pay the penalty of your treason.

Coriolanus. Away, you old goat!

Senators, etc. We stand surety for him; there is no need to arrest him.

Cominius. Old sir, take your hands off him.

Coriolanus. Away, you old wretch! Or I shall give you such a shaking that your bones will be dis-

Out of thy garments.

Sic. Help, ye citizens !

[*Enter a rabble*[1] *of* Citizens (*Plebeians*)[2]. *with the* Aediles.]

Men. On both sides more respect.

Sic. Here's he that would take from you all your power.

Bru. Seize him, *aediles*[3] !

Citizens. Down with him ! down with him !

Senators, etc. Weapons, weapons, weapons !

[*They all bustle about* CORIOLANUS, *crying.*

"Tribunes !" "Patricians !" "Citizens !" "What, ho !"

"Sicinius !" "Brutus !" "Coriolanus !" "Citizens !"

"Peace, peace, peace !" "Stay, hold, peace !"

Men. What is about to be ? I am out of breath ;
Confusion's[4] near ; I cannot speak. You, tribunes,
To the people ! Coriolanus, patience !
Speak, good Sicinius.

Sic. Hear me, people ; peace !

Citizens. Let's hear our tribune : peace ! Speak speak, speak.

Sic. You are at point to lose your liberties :
Marcius would have all from you ; Marcius,
Whom late you have named for consul.

Men. Fie[5], fie, fie !
This is the way to *kindle*[6], not to *quench*[7].

First Sen. To *unbuild*[8] the city and to lay all flat.

Sic. What is the city but the people ?

1. crowd of common people.
2. commoners.
3. assistants to the tribunes.
4. ruin is.
5. a word indicating disapproval.
6. excite ; instigate.
7. to calm down.
8. destroy.

located and will fall out of your clothes.

Sicinius. Help, you citizens !

(*Enter a mob of* Citizens ; *the commoners with the* Officers.)

Menenius. Let more courtesy be shown by both sides.

Sicinius. Here is the man who wishes to deprive you of all your rights and authority.

Brutus. Arrest him, officers.

Citizens. Down with him ! Down with him !

Senators etc. Weapons, weapons, weapons ! (*They all move around* Coriolanus, *pushing and jostling in confusion, crying* "Tribunes", "nobles" ! "citizens" ! "what is happening, ho !" "Sicinius" "Brutus !" "Coriolanus !" "citizens" "peace, peace, peace !"

Menenius. What is going to happen ? I am exhausted and breathless. We are threatened with complete ruin. I am unable to speak. You, tribunes, speak to the people ! Coriolanus, be patient ! Speak to the people, good Sicinius.

Sicinius. Listen to me, citizens ; be silent.

Citizens. Let us listen to our tribune. Silence ! Speak, speak, speak.

Sicinius. You are on the verge of losing your freedom and your rights. Marcius wishes to deprive you of your rights and authority, Marcius whom you recently elected to the consulship.

Menenius. Shame on you ; shame on you ; shame on you. You are speaking to enrage the mob, not to pacify them.

First Senator. Your speech is such as to lead to the destruction of the city and to bring complete ruin to it.

Sicinius. What is the city but the people ? (or, the city means the people who live in it.)

Citizens. True,
The people are the city.

Bru. By the consent of all, we were establish'd
The people's magistrates.

Citizens. You so remain.

Men. And so are like to do.

Com. That is the way to lay the city flat;
To bring the roof to the foundation,
And bury all, which yet distinctly ranges,
In heaps and piles of ruin.

Sic. This deserves death.

Bru. Or let us stand to our authority,
Or let us lose it. We do here pronounce,
Upon the part o' the people, in whose power
We were elected theirs, Marcius is worthy
Of present death.

Sic. Therefore lay hold of him;
Bear him to the *rock Tarpeian*[1], and from thence
Into desrtuction cast him.

Bru. Aediles, seize him!

Citizens. Yield, Marcius, yield!

Men. Hear me one word;
Beseech you, tribunes, hear me but a word.

Aed. Peace, peace!

Men. [To BRUTUS] Be that you seem, truly your country's friend,
And *temperately*[2] proceed to what you would
Thus violently *redress.*[3]

Bru. Sir, those cold ways,
That seem like *prudent helps,*[4] are very poisonous

1. the name of a rock.

2. moderately; gently.

3. remedy.

4 remedies dictated by wisdom.

Citizens. True, the city means the people who live in it.

Brutus. It was with the wishes of all the citizens that we were appointed the tribunes.

Citizens. You are still the tribunes. (or, you still hold that position.)

Menenius. And you are likely to continue as such.

Cominius. That is the way to bring complete ruin to the city, to raze the city to the ground, to demolish and bury everything, which so far stands in orderly arrangement, in heaps and heaps of debris.

Sicinius. A man who speaks thus should be put to death.

Brutus. Either let us assert our authority or let us give it up. We do here declare, on behalf of the people, from whom we derive our authority to act as their representatives, that Marcius deserves to be put to death immediately.

Sicinius. Therefore, catch hold of him: carry him to the Tarpeian rock and from there throw him down to meet his death.

Brutus. Officers, catch hold of Marcius!

Citizens. Marcius, surrender, surrender; give yourself up!

Menenius. Listen to a word from me; I appeal to you, tribunes, to listen to only one word from me.

Officers. Silence, silence!

Menenius. (*to* Brutus) Act in accordance with what you appear to be; be a true well-wisher of your country; and, instead of this violent procedure to redress people's grievances, adopt a moderate course of action.

Brutus. Sir, those cautious methods, which appear like remedies dictated by prudence, are very

Where the disease is violent. Lay hands upon him,
And bear him to the rock.

Cor. No, I'll die here. [*Drawing his sword.*
There's some among you have beheld me fighting:
Come, try upon yourselves what you have seen me.

Men. Down with that sword! Tribunes, withdraw awhile.

Bru. Lay hands upon him.

Men. Help Marcius, help,
You that be noble; help him, young and old!

Citizens. Down with him, down with him!

[*In this mutiny, the* Tribunes, *the* Aediles, *and the* People, *are beat in.*

Men. Go, get you to your house; be gone, away!
All will be *naught*[1] *else*[2].

Sec. Sen. Get you gone.

Com. Stand fast;
We have as many friends as enemies.

Men. Shall it be put to that?

First Sen. The gods forbid!
I *prithee*[3], noble friend, home to thy house;
Leave us to cure this cause.

Men. For 'tis a *sore*[4] upon us
You cannot *tent*[5] yourself; be gone, beseech you.

Com. Come, sir, along with us.

1. nothing; ruined.
2. otherwise.
3. pray you.
4. wound; boil.
5. cure by probing.

harmful when the disease is so desperate as to demand violence. Seize him and carry him to the rock.

Coriolanus. No, I will die here. (*He draws his sword*). There are some among you who have seen me fighting. Come and test for yourselves the manner in which you have seen me fighting against my enemies.

Menenius. Do not draw your sword. Tribunes, move back for a little while.

Brutus. Seize him.

Menenius. Come to the help of Marcius ; all of you who are noble, help Marcius ; all young and old should help Marcius !

Citizens. Down with Marcius ! Down with Marcius !

(*There is a struggle and a scuffle. The Tribunes, the Officers and the Citizens are driven back.*)

Menenius. Go home : leave this place and go, otherwise everything will be ruined.

Second Senator. Be off with you as fast as you can.

Cominius. There are as many on our side as against us. Let our supporters stand here firmly.

Menenius. Do you wish matters to be decided by mere strength ?

First Senator. The gods forbid that this should be so ! I pray you, noble friend, go home to your house. Leave us to mend matters by removing the cause of the present conflict.

Menenius. For it is a disease that has afflicted us and that you yourselves cannot cure by probing ; I appeal to you to go away quickly.

Cominius. Come along with us, sir.

Cor. I would they were ***barbarians***[1] – as they are,
Though in Rome litter'd—not Romans—as they are not,
Though Calved i' the porch o' the capitol—

Men. Be gone ;
Put not your worthy rage into your tongue ;
One time will owe another.

Cor. On fair ground
I could beat forty of them.

Men. I could myself
Take up a ***brace***[2] o' the best of them ; yea, the two tribunes.

Com. But now 'tis *odds*[3] beyond arithmetic ;
And *manhood*[4] is call'd foolery, when it stands
Against a falling *fabric*[5]. Will you *hence*[6],
Before the *tag*[7] return ? whose rage doth *rend*[8]
Like interrupted waters and *o'erbear*[9]
What they are used to bear.

Men. Pray you, be gone :
I'll try whether my old wit be in request
With those that have but little : this must be *patch'd*[10]
With cloth of any colour.

Com. Nay, come away.
[*Exeunt* CORIOLANUS, COMINIUS, *and others.*

A Patrician. This man has marr'd his fortune.

Men. His nature is too noble for the world :

1. foreigners.
2. pair.
3. indicative of unfavourable possibility.
4. courage.
5. structure; building.
6. go from here.
7. rabble.
8. destroy.
9. sweep away.
10. mended.

Coriolanus. I wish they were barbarians upon whom I could revenge myself fully ; and indeed they deserve no better name than barbarians. Although they were born in Rome, they do not possess the Roman character. They certainly do not possess the true Roman character even though they were born and bred in the very centre of Rome (in the porch of the Senate-hall itself).

Menenius. Be gone. Do not give expression to your anger which you have good reason to feel. We will get another opportunity to make up for what has happened to-day.

Coriolanus. In a fair fight I could beat forty of those fellows.

Menenius. I could myself fight against a pair of the best of them ; I mean the two tribunes.

Cominius. But now the forces against us are beyond all calculation and courage becomes mere fool-hardiness when a man tries to oppose his strength to that of a building which is about to fall and which will surely crush him in its fall. Will you leave this place before the mob returns ? The fury of the mob is as violent as the fury of waters the course of which has been dammed up and which sweeps away to destruction what they normally used to carry on their surface.

Menenius. I pray you to go away from here. I will see whether the good sense of an old man like me is likely to be appreciated by those who themselves have very little of good sense. This situation must be mended by any possible means.

Cominius. No, come away. (Coriolanus, Cominius *and others depart.*)

A nobleman. This man has ruined himself.

Men enius. His nature is so noble that he cannot

He would not flatter *Neptune*[1] for his *trident*[2],
Or *Jove*[3] for's power to thunder. His heart's his mouth :
What his breast forges, that his tongue must vent ;
And, being angry, does forget that ever
He heard the name of death. [*A noise within.*
Here's goodly work !

Sec. Pat. I would they were a-bed !

Men. I would they were in *Tiber*[4] ! What the vengeance !
Could he not speak 'em *fair*[5] ?

[*Re-enter* BRUTUS *and* SICINIUS, *with the rabble*[6].]

Sic. Where is this *viper*[7],
That would depopulate the city and
Be every man himself ?

Men. You worthy tribunes,—

Sic. He shall be thrown down the Tarpeian rock
With rigorous hands : he hath resisted law,
And therefore law shall scorn him furthur trial
Than the severity of the public power
Which he so sets at nought.

First Cit. He shall well know
The noble tribunes are the people's mouths,
And we their hands.

Citizens. He shall, *sure on't*[8].

Men. Sir, sir,—
Sic. Peace !
Men. Do not *cry havoc*[9], where you should but hunt
With *modest warrant*[10].

1. god of the sea.
2. Neptune's weapon.
3. the chief god.
4. the name of a river flowing through Rome.
5 gently.
6. crowd of common people.
7. poisonous fellow.
8. be sure of it.
9. give the signal for general slaughter.
10. justified moderation.

get on in this world. He would not flatter Neptune (the god of the sea) even if through flattery he could obtain the instrument with which Neptune controls the sea, nor would he flatter Jupiter in order to get Jupiter's power to throw thunder-bolts. He must speak what he feels. What he experiences in his heart, must find an out-let through his tongue and, when he is angry, he does not mind even if he is faced with the danger of death. (*Noise within*) Here is a pretty state of affairs!

Second nobleman. I wish they were sleeping in their beds!

Menenius. I wish they were drowned in the river Tiber! Why, curse it! Why should Coriolanus not speak to the crowd gently?

(*Re-enter* Brutus *and* Sicinius *with the mob.*)

Sicinius. Where is this poisonous fellow who wishes to destroy the people and arrogate all powers to himself?

Menenius. Be patient, you worthy tribunes—

Sicinius. He shall be thrown down from the Tarpeian rock with ruthless hands. He has defied the law and therefore the law shall refuse to give him any further trial than the utmost sternness which can be exercised by that power of the people which he so despises and defies.

First Citizen. He shall be made to learn that the worthy tribunes are the spokesmen of the people and that the people are the physical instruments in the hands of the Tribunes.

Citizens. He shall be made to learn that; you may be sure of that.

Menenius. Sir, sir,

Sicinius. Silence!

Menenius. Do not give the signal for general slaughter, when you should only punish with justifiable moderation.

Sic. Sir, how comes't that you
Have *holp*[1] to make this rescue ?

1. helped.

Men. Hear me speak ;
As I do know the consul's worthiness,
So can I name his faults.—

Sic. Consul ! what consul ?

Men. The consul Coriolanus.

Bru. He consul !

Citizens. No, no, no, no, no.

Men. If, by the tribunes' leave, and yours, good people,
I may be heard, I would *crave*[2] a word or two ;
The which shall turn you to no further harm
Than so much loss of time.

2. beg permission.

Sic. Speak briefly then ;
For we are *peremptory*[3] *to dispatch*[4]
This viperous traitor : to eject him hence
Were but our danger, and to keep him here
Our certain death : therefore it is decreed
He dies to-night.

3. firmly resolved.
4. to kill.

Men. Now the good gods forbid
That our renowned Rome, whose gratitude
Towards her deserved children is enroll'd
In Jove's own book, like an unnatural *dam*[5]
Should now eat up her own !

5. mother.

Sic. He's a disease that must be cut away.

Men. O, he's a limb that has but a disease ;
Mortal[6], to cut it off ; to cure it, easy.
What has he done to Rome that's worthy death ?
Killing our enemies, the blood he hath lost,—

6. fatal.

Sicinius. Sir, what are the circumstances under which you helped Marcius to escape from the clutches of the people ?

Menenius. Hear me speak ; if I know the good qualities of the consul and his honourable nature, I can also enumerate his faults,—

Sicinius. Consul ! What consul are you talking about ?

Menenius. The consul Coriolanus.

Brutus. It is ridiculous to call him consul !

Citizens. We by no means accept him as the consul. No, no, no.

Menenius. If, with the permission of the tribunes, and with your permission, you good people, I can have your ear, I would earnestly beg you to allow me to say a word or two. Hearing me will do you no more injury than loss of as much time as will be needed for you to hear me.

Sicinius. Speak then, but be brief : for we have firmly resolved to put to death this dangerous traitor. To banish him from Rome would mean a continuing danger to us, and to keep him here in Rome would mean our sure death ; therefore it is decided that he be put to death tonight.

Menenius. Now the good gods prevent our well-famed Rome, whose gratitude towards her deserving sons is recorded in heaven, from killing one of those deserving sons like an unnatural female animal devouring her own off-spring.

Sicinius. He is a disease that must be eliminated from the life of Rome.

Menenius. O, it is only one of his limbs that is diseased ; to cut off that limb would be fatal, while it is easy to cure the limb of its disease. What harm has he done to Rome to deserve the punishment of death ? He fought against our enemies and lost more

Which, I dare *vouch*[1], is more than that he hath
By many an ounce—he dropp'd it for his country,
And what is left, to lose it by his country,
Were to us all, that do't and suffer it,
A *brand*[2] to the end o' the world.

Sic. This is *clean kam*[3].

Bru. Merely *awry*[4] : when he did love his country
It honour'd him.

Sic. The service of the foot
Being once *gangrened*[5], is not then respected
For what before it was.

Bru. We'll hear no more.
Pursue him to his house, and pluck him *thence*[6] :
Lest his infection, being of catching nature,
Spread further.

Men. One word more, one word.
This tiger-footed rage, when it shall find
The harm of *unscann'd swiftness*[7], will too late
Tie leaden pounds to's heels. Proceed *by process*[8];
Lest parties, as he is beloved, break out,
And *sack*[9] great Rome *with*[10] Romans.

Bru. If it were so,—

Sic. What do ye talk ?
Have we not had a taste of his obedience ?
Our aediles *smote*[11] ? ourselves resisted ? Come.

Men. Consider this : he has been bred i' the wars
Since he could draw a sword, and is ill school'd

1. bear testimony to.
2. stigma ; mark of disgrace.
3. wholly crooked.
4. beside the point.
5. infected.
6. from there.
7. unconsidered haste.
8. according to procedure.
9. destroy.
10. by means of.
11. smitten; beaten

of his blood in the fighting than, I dare affirm, the quantity of blood that is left in his body. He lost that blood in the service of his country and if what is left in his body were to be shed by his own country, it would be for all of us, who do this deed and who allow it to be done, a mark of disgrace which will stick to us to the end of time.

Sicinius. This is a wholly deceitful argument.

Brutus. An argument utterly beside the point. When he did love his country, his country did honour him.

Sicinius. When a foot is rendered unserviceable by a dangerous infection, we of course cease to think of the good service it rendered to us in former days.

Brutus. We will hear no more. We will chase him to his house and seize him from there lest the disease, with which he is infected and which is contagious, should spread any further.

Menenius. One word more ; only one word more. When this fury that leaps with the swift foot of the cruel tiger has done the harm that results from unconsidered haste, it will be too late to restrain it by applying a curb or a brake. Act by deliberate procedure ; lest he, being a beloved figure in Rome, should be the cause of the division of the people into parties which will lead to the destruction of great Rome by Romans themselves.

Brutus. If it were so,—

Sicinius. What is the use of talking ? Have we not already tasted the fruit of obeying him ? (Have we not suffered the evil consequences of rendering obedience to him ?) Our officers were attacked, while we ourselves were defied. Come.

Menenius. Think over this ; he has been brought up in the midst of fighting ever since he was grown-up to draw a sword, and he has not been trained in the use of well-chosen language ; when he speaks, he

In *bolted*[1] language ; *meal and bran*[2] together
He throws without distinction. Give me leave,
I'll go to him, and undertake to bring him
Where he shall answer, by a lawful form,
In peace, to his utmost peril.

First Sen. Noble tribunes
It is the *humane*[3] way : the other course
Will prove too bloody, and the end of it
Unknown to the beginning.

Sic. Noble Menenius,
Be you then as the people's officer.
Masters, lay down your weapons.

Bru. Go not home.

Sic. Meet on the market-place. We'll attend you there :
Where, if you bring not Marcius, we'll proceed
In our first way.

Men I'll bring him to you.
[*To the* Senators] Let me desire your company : he must come,
Or what is worst will follow.

First Sen. Pray you, *let's to him.*[4] [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II

A room in CORIOLANUS's *house.*

[*Enter* CORIOLANUS *with* Patricians.]

Cor. Let them pull all about mine ears. present me
Death on the wheel or at wild horses' heels,
Or pile ten hills on the *Tarpeian rock*[5],
That the *precipitation*[6] might down stretch
Below the beam of sight, yet will I still
Be thus to them.

1. carefully considered.
2. grains and husks.
3. civilised.
4. Let us go to him.
5. the name of a rock.
6. abyss.

indiscriminately mixes relevant matter with irrelevant matter. Give me permission ; I will go to him, and undertake to bring him to reply, peacefully and in accordance with the lawful procedure, to the most dangerous charge that can be brought against him.

First Senator. Noble tribunes, this is the civilised course of action ; the other course will lead to too much blood-shed, and the end will be something which is now impossible to calculate (and the end will be an utter stranger to the beginning.)

Sicinius. Noble Menenius, be you then the leader of the people. (*To the people*) Masters, put down your weapons.

Brutus. But do not go home.

Sicinius. Assemble in the market place. (*To Menenius*) We will wait for you there ; and if you do not bring Marcius to that place we will follow the course which we at first intended to follow.

Menenius. I will bring him to you. (*To the Senators*) I wish you to accompany me. He must agree to come. If he refuses, the worst possible consequences will follow.

First Senator. Pray you, let us go to him.
(*They all depart*)

ACT III SCENE II

A room in the house of Coriolanus.

(*Enter* Coriolanus *in the company of the nobles.*)

Coriolanus. Let them bring destruction down upon me. Let them kill me by binding me to a whirling wheel or by tying me to two chariots driving in opposite directions ; or let them raise the height of the Tarpeian rock ten times so that the abyss down which I am to be flung might become too deep for eyesight to pierce ; yet will I continue to be as unyielding to them as before.

A Patrician. You do the nobler.

Cor. I *muse*[1] my mother
Does not approve me further, who was *wont*[2]
To call them *woollen vassals*[3], things created
To buy and sell with *groats*[4], to show bare heads
In *congregations*[5], to yawn, be still and wonder,
When one but of my *ordinance*[6] stood up
To speak of peace or war.

1. wonder.
2. accustomed.
3. coarse-clad slaves
4. four-penny coins.
5. public assemblies.
6. rank; status.

[*Enter* VOLUMNIA.]

I talk of you.
Why did you wish me milder? would you have me
False to my nature? Rather say I play
The man I am.

Vol. O, sir, sir, sir,
I would have had you put your power well on,
Before you had worn it out.

Cor. Let go.

Vol. You might have been enough the man you are
With striving less to be so: lesser had been
The *thawartings*[7] of your *dispositions*[8], if
You had not show'd them how ye were disposed
Ere[9] they lack'd power to *cross*[10] you.

7. opposition to.
8. inclinations.
9. before.
10. oppose.

Cor. Let them hang.

Vol. Ay, and burn too.

[*Enter* MENENIUS *and* Senators.]

Men. Come, come, you have been too rough something too rough;
You must return and mend it.

First Sen. There's no remedy;
Unless by not so doing, our good city
Cleave[11] in the midst, and *perish*[12].,

11. split.
12. go to ruin.

A Nobleman. You should adopt the nobler course.

Coriolanus. I wonder why my mother does not warmly sympathise with my attitude towards the people when she herself used to call them coarse-clad slaves, fellows created to carry on their petty trades, to stand with their heads uncovered in public assemblies, to yawn lazily, to be still and to be filled with wonder when any one of my rank or status stood up to speak on the subject of peace or war.

(*Enter* Volumnia.)

I was just talking of you. Why did you wish that I should have spoken to the people more mildly? Do you want me to behave in a manner contrary to my nature? Instead of rebuking me, you should rather say that I have only shown myself in my true colours.

Volumnia. O, sir, sir, sir; I should have wished that you had become accustomed to your power before using it so roughly as to lose it completely.

Coriolonus. Never mind.

Volumnia. You might have shown your real character sufficiently, if you had been less eager to assert yourself. Your inclinations would have met with less opposition if you had not revealed your true self to them till they had lost all power to oppose you.

Coriolanus. Let them hang.

Volumnia. Yes, and let them burn too.

[*Enter* Menenius *and* Senators.]

Menenius. Come, come, you have been too rough, a little too rough. You must come back and mend matters.

First Senator. There is no cure for what has happened, unless you call this a cure that, by our acting differently, our good city should split in the middle and be ruined.

Vol. Pray, *be counsell'd*[1] :
I have a heart as little *apt*[2] as yours,
But yet a brain that leads my use of anger
To better *vantage*[3].

Men. Well said, noble woman !

1. be advised.
2. ready.
3. advantage ; account.

Before he should thus stoop to the herd, but that
The violent fit o' the times *craves*[4] it as *physic*[5]
For the whole state, I would put mine armour on,
Which I can scarcely bear.

4. ask for : seeks.
5. welfare.

Cor. What must I do ?

Men. Return to the tribunes.

Cor. Well, what then ? what then ?

Men. Repent what you have *spoke*[6].

6. spoken.

Cor. For them ! I cannot do it to the gods ;
Must I then *do't*[7] to them ?

7. do it.

Vol. You are too *absolute*[8] ;
Though therein you can never be too noble,
But when *extremities*[9] speak. I have heard you say,
Honour and *policy*[10], like *unsever'd*[11] friends,
I' the war do grow together : grant that, and tell me,
In peace what each of them by the other lose,
That they combine not there.

8. unyielding.
9. critical circumstances.
10. cunning.
11. inseparable.

Cor. *Tush, tush*[12] !

Men. A good demand.

12. exclamation of impatience.

Vol. If it be honour in your wars to seem
The same you are not, which, for your best ends,

Volumnia. Pray, listen to good advice. My heart is not more easily impressed by fear than yours, but my brain teaches me to turn my anger to better advantage.

Menenius. Well spoken, noble woman! The fit of madness from which the people are suffering at this time demands that, in the interests of the whole state, Marcius should yield. If the situation had not demanded this, I would have never suggested that he should yield to the ignorant mob. In fact, I would have put on my armour, although I am too old to do so, and would have stood by him against the mob.

Coriolanus. What do you me to do?

Menenius. Go back to the tribunes.

Coriolanus. Well, what am I to say to them? What have I to do?

Menenius. You should express your regret for the way you have spoken.

Coriolanus. Express my regret to them! I cannot do so even for the sake of the gods; how can I agree to do so for the sake of the common people?

Volumnia. You speak with too much firmness. Though it is true that the more firm you are, the more noble you will show yourself to be; yet when the situation becomes critical, you must dilute your firmness. I have heard you say that nobleness and diplomacy flourish together like inseparable friends during times of war. If you admit that, then tell me how in time of peace either of these can be so injured by combination with the other as to make it necessary to keep them apart.

Coriolanus. Do not speak like that.

Menenius. But it is a very pertinent question.

Volumnia. If it is honourable in time of war to put on a false appearance and to adopt diplomacy

You adopt your policy, how is it less or worse,
That it shall hold companionship in peace
With honour, as in war, since that to both
It stands in like request ?

Cor. Why force you this ?

Vol. Because that now it lies you on to speak
To the people ; not by your own instruction,
Nor by the matter which your heart prompts you,
But with such words that are but *roted*[1] in
Your tongue, though but bastards and syllables
Of no allowance to your bosom's truth.
Now, this no more dishonours you at all
Than to take in a town with gentle words,
Which else would put you to your fortune and
The *hazard*[2] of much blood.
I would *dissemble*[3] with my nature where
My fortunes and my friends at stake required
I should do so in honour : I am in this,
Your wife, your son, these senators, the nobles ;
And you will rather show our general *louts*[4]
How you can frown than *spend a fawn upon 'em*[5],
For the *inheritance*[6] of their loves and safeguard
Of what that want might ruin.

Men. Noble lady !
Come, go with us ; speak fair : you may *salve*[7] so.
Not what is dangerous present, but the loss
Of what is past.

Vol. I *prithee*[8] now, my son,
Go to them, with this *bonnet*[9] in thy hand ;
And thus far having stretch'd it—here be with them—

1. learnt by rote.
2. risk.
3. put on false airs.
4. clowns.
5. flatter them.
6. possession.
7. save ; recover.
8. pray you.
9. cap.

(cunning) in order best to secure your object, how is it less honourable or more degrading to combine honour with cunning in time of peace, because both in time of peace and war, cunning (or diplomacy) is equally necessary.

Coriolanus. Why do you urge this point so strongly ?

Volumnia. Because now it is necessary for you to speak to the people ; and you must speak to the people not according to your own beliefs nor according to the dictates of your heart, but with words which you might have learnt by rote, though those words may have to be spoken by you under the stress of necessity and are in no way agreeable and acceptable to your real feelings. Such a course will be no more dishonourable to you than to capture a town with gentle words instead of being compelled to risk everything and face the possibility of shedding much blood. I would not mind putting on a false pose in cases in which my fortune and my friends are threatened with danger and in which that danger made it a point of honour that I should put on that false pose. In this matter you must look upon me as speaking for your wife, for your son, and for these noble Senators ; and yet you persist in showing the multitude, the clownish populace how terribly you can frown instead of flattering them just a little in order to win their love and in order to protect that which, without their love, is likely to be ruined.

Menenius. The noble lady has spoken wisely. Come, Marcius, go with us to the people ; speak to them gently ; by doing so you may not only cure what is dangerous in the present but also make up for the loss that has already been suffered.

Volumnia. I pray you now, my son, go to them with this cap of yours in your hand and, having stretched out your hand, with your cap in it, salute the people with a courteous bow, your knee lightly

Thy knee *bussing*[1] the stones—for in such business
Action is eloquence, and the eyes of the ignorant
More learned than the ears—waving thy head,
Which often, thus, correcting thy *stout*[2] heart,
Now humble as the ripest mulberry
That will not hold the handling : or say to them,
Thou art their soldier, and being bred in *broils*[3]
Hast not the soft way which, thou dost confess,
Were fit for thee to use as they to claim,
In asking their good loves, but thou wilt frame
Thyself *forsooth*[4], hereafter theirs, so far
As thou hast power and person.

Men. This but done,
Even as she speaks, why, their hearts were yours ;
For they have pardons, being ask'd, as free
As words to little purpose.

Vol. Prithee now,
Go, and be ruled : although I know thou hadst rather
Follow thine enemy in a fiery gulf
Than flatter him in a *bower*[5]. Here is Cominius.

[*Enter* COMINIUS]

Com. I have been i' the market-place ; and, sir, 'tis fit
You make strong party, or defend yourself
By calmness or by absence : all's in anger.

Men. Only *fair speech*[6].

Com. I think 'twill serve, if he
Can thereto frame his spirit.

1. lightly touching.
2. proud.
3. fighting.
4. certainly.
5. comfortable chamber.
6. gentle words.

touching the stones on the ground, for in matters of this kind gestures are very effective and an appeal to the eyes of the ignorant mob is more fruitful than an appeal to their ears. Then courteously bowing your head to them repeatedly, and correcting your obstinate heart which by this time will have become as soft as a mulberry so ripe that it will not bear handling, say to them that you are their soldier and that, having been brought up in the mid t of battles and combats, you do not have those gentle manners which, you do admit, was your duty to employ as much as they had a claim to expect the same from you, in order that you might ask them for their goodwill. Tell them further that for the future you will certainly discipline yourself to be their faithful servant to the best of your faculties, mental and physical.

Menenius. You have only to speak the words as your mother has spoken and, without doubt, you will in a moment win their hearts ; for they are just as ready to pardon a wrong as to talk in their usual foolish manner.

Volumnia. I pray you now to go and allow yourself to be guided by us in this matter ; although I know that you would rather chase your enemy into a burning gulf than flatter him in a comfortable, shaded spot. Here comes Cominius.

(*Enter* Cominius.)

Cominius. I have been in the market place ; and sir, it will be well either to take with you a strong party of your friends, or to seek safety by using gentle words or by absenting yourself from the scene. The whole multitude is in a state of anger.

Menenius. The best way out of the danger is to use gentle words.

Cominius. I think that gentle words will achieve the purpose provided he can prevail upon himself to use them.

Vol. He must, and will.
Prithee now, say you will, and go about it.

Cor. Must I go show them my *unbarb'd sconce*[1] ? Must I
With my base tongue give to my noble heart
A lie that it must bear ? Well, I will do't :
Yet, were there but this single plot to lose,
This *mould*[2] of Marcius, they to dust should *grind*[3] it
And throw't against the wind. To the market-place !
You have put me now to such a part which never
I shall discharge *to the life*[4].

Com. Come, come, we'll prompt you.

Vol. I *prithee*[5] now, sweet son, as thou hast said
My praises made thee first a soldier, so,
To have my praise for this, perform a part
That hast not done before.

Cor. Well, I must do't :
Away, my *disposition*[6], and possess me
Some woman's spirit ! my throat of war be turn'd,
Which *quired with*[7] my drum, into a pipe
Small[8] as an eunuch's, or the virgin voice
That babies lulls asleep ! the smiles of knaves
Tent[9] in my cheeks, and schoolboys' tears take up
The glasses of my sight ! a beggar's tongue
Make motion through my lips, and my arm'd knees,
Who bow'd but in my stirrup, bend like his
That hath received an alms ! I will not do't,
Lest I *surcease*[10] to honour mine own truth
And by my body's action teach my mind
A most inherent baseness.

1. bare head.
2. body.
3. crush.
4. with a natural effect.
5. pray you.
6. nature.
7. sounded in harmony with.
8. shrill
9. encamp; dwell (temporarily).
10. cease.

Volumnia. He must, and he will. I pray you now to say that you agree to pursue this course and that you are going to adopt it.

Coriolanus. Must I go to them and show them my un-protected bare head ? Must I, having noble feelings in my heart, yet degrade my tongue by expressing sentiments that I do not feel and in this way utter the falsehood which my heart must accept ? Well, I will do so ; yet if there were only this body of clay to lose, this mere bodily fame in which I am cast, they will be allowed to crush it and throw it to the winds. I will go to the market place. You have forced me now to undertake a part which I shall never perform with any natural grace.

Cominius. Come, come, we will help and guide you.

Volumnia. I pray you now, sweet son, as you have said that my praises were responsible for making you a soldier, so, in order to win my praise now, you should perform a part which you have never played before.

Coriolanus. Well, there is no alternative for me but to do so. Let my own spirit leave me and let me be possessed by the spirit of a woman ! Let my voice, which could only utter words of command in battle and which used to sound in harmony with the drums of battle, be now converted into a shrill sound like that of a eunuch or into a maidenly voice that soothes children to sleep ! May the hypocritical smiles of rogues take possession of my cheeks and the tears of school-boys dwell in my eye-balls ? Let the voice of a beggar sound through my lips, and my knees which formerly bent only in my stirrup now bend like that of a beggar who has received charity ! I will not do so, lest I cease to honour my own truth, and I will not, by the degrading action of my body, introduce into my mind a baseness that will cling to it persistently.

Vol. At thy choice, then :
To beg of thee, it is my more dishonour
Than thou of them. Come all to ruin ; let
Thy mother rather feel thy pride than fear
Thy dangerous *stoutness*[1], for I mock at death
With as *big*[2] heart as thou. Do as thou *list*[3].
Thy *valiantness*[4] was mine, thou suck'dst it from me,
But owe thy pride thyself.

Cor. Pray, be content :
Mother, I am going to the market-place ;
Chide[5] me no more. I'll *mountebank their loves*[6],
Cog[7] their hearts from them, and come home beloved
Of all the trades in Rome. Look, I am going :
Commend me to my wife. I'll return consul ;
Or never trust to what my tongue can do
I' the way of flattery further.

Vol. Do your will. [*Exit.*
Com. Away ! the tribunes do attend you : arm yourself
To answer mildly ; for they are prepared
With accusations, as I hear, more strong
Than are upon you yet.
Cor. The word is "mildly." Pray you, let us go :
Let them accuse me by invention, I
Will answer in mine honour.

Men. Ay, but mildly.
Cor. Well, mildly be it then. Mildly ! [*Exeunt.*

1. pride ; stubbornness.
2. brave.
3. please.
4. bravery.
5. scold.
6. win their love through false pretence.
7. cheat.

Volumnia. Be it as you please, then. It is a greater dishonour for me to make appeals to you than for you to make appeals to the people. Let everything come to ruin; let me rather bend beneath your obstinate pride than stoop to any fear of the dangers which your obstinacy may bring down upon us, for I defy death with as fearless a heart as you. (Let the worst happen and let utter ruin overtake everything. As your mother, I am willing to bow to your pride because that is a thing that I can bear ; but to fear the dangers which may result from your pride is for me out of the question, because I can defy death with as bold a heart as you.) Do as you please. Your valour was derived from me as you sucked it with the milk from my breast ; but so far as your pride is concerned, it is all your own.

Coriolanus. I pray you, be calm. Mother, I am going to the market place ; scold me no more. I will use all the tricks to win their goodwill ; I will cheat them of their affection ; and I will come home with the love of all the trades-people in Rome. Look, I am going. Convey my love and greetings to my wife. I will return home as the consul of Rome ; if not, never believe that my tongue can achieve the desired object even where flattering the people is concerned.

Volumnia. Do as you please. (*She leaves*.)

Cominius. Go. The tribunes are waiting for you. Discipline yourself to explain your position in gentle words ; for, as I hear, they are ready with stronger accusations than have so far been brought against you.

Coriolanus. Yes, I will remember that I must speak to them gently. Pray you, let us go. Let them accuse me of any crimes they can invent. I will answer the charges according to the dictates of my honour.

Menenius. Yes, but you must be gentle.

Coriolanus. Well, let it be done gently. Yes, gently ! (*They leave*.)

SCENE III

The same. The Forum.

[*Enter* SICINIUS *and* BRUTUS.]

Bru. In this point charge him home, that he *affects*[1]
Tyrannical[2] power : if he *evade*[3] us there,
Enforce him with his *envy*[4] to the people,
And that the *spoil*[5] got on the Antiates
Was ne'er distributed.

1. aims at.
2. dictatorial.
3. escape.
4. malice.
5. plunder.

[*Enter an Aedile.*[6]]

What, will he come ?

6. assistant : to the tribunes.

Aed. He's coming.

Bru. How accompanied ?

Aed. With old Menenius, and those senators
That always favour'd him.

Sic. Have you a *catalogue*[7]
Of all the *voices*[8] that we have procured
Set down by the poll ?

7. list.
8. votes.

Aed. I have ; 'tis ready.

Sic. Have you collected them by tribes ?

Aed. I have.

Sic. Assemble *presently*[9] the people hither ;
And when they hear me say "It shall be so
I' the right and strength o' the *commons,*[10]" be it either
For death, for fine, or banishment, then let them,
If I say fine, cry "Fine" ; if death, cry "Death."
Insisting on the old *prerogative*[11]
And power i' the truth o' the cause.

9. instantly
10. common people.
11. right ; privilege

Aed. I shall inform them.

Bru. And when such time they have begun to cry,

ACT III SCENE III

The same. The Forum

(*Enter* Sicinius *and* Brutus.)

Brutus. So far as this point is concerned, namely, that he aims at dictatorial power, press it so strongly that he may not be able to escape. If he escapes us where this point is concerned, then lay stress upon the hatred he bears to the people and vigorously assert that the plunder taken from the Antiates was never distributed among the soldiers.

(*Enter an* Officer.)

What, will Marcius come ?

Officer. He is coming.

Brutus. Who accompanies him ?

Officer. He is accompanied by old Menenius and those Senators who have always taken his side.

Sicinius. Have you a list of the voters whose support we have secured by canvassing and whom we have registered man by man ?

Officer. I have got it with me ; it is ready.

Sicinius. Have you collected the names according to the areas in which they live ?

Officer. I have done so.

Sicinius. Ask the people to collect here at once and when they hear me say, "It shall be so as the rights and powers of the common people dictate," whether the popular vote be for his death, for fining him, or for banishing him, then let them support my proposal for fine or for death whichever I propose at the time, insisting on their well-established right and on the power which the justice of our cause gives us.

Officer. I shall inform the people accordingly.

Brutus. And when they have once begun to

Let them not cease, but with a *din*[1] confused
Enforce the present *execution*[2]
Of what we chance to sentence.

Aed. Very well.

Sic. Make them be strong and ready for this hint,
When we shall *hap*[3] to give't them.

Bru. Go about it. [*Exit* Aedile.

Put him to *choler*[4] straight : he hath been used
Ever to conquer, and to have his worth
Of contradiction : being once *chafed*[5], he cannot
Be *rein'd*[6] again to *temperance*[7] ; then he speaks
What's in his heart ; and that is there which looks
With us to break his neck.

Sic. Well, here he comes.

[*Enter* CORIOLANUS, MENENIUS, *and* COMINIUS, *with* Senators *and* *Patricians*[8].]

Men. Calmly, I do *beseech*[9] you.

Cor. Ay, as an ostler, that for the poorest piece
Will *bear the knave*[10] *by the volume*[11]. The honour'd gods
Keep Rome in safety, and the chairs of justice
Supplied with worthy men ! plant love among's !
Throng our large temples with the shows of peace,
And not our streets with war !

First Sen. *Amen*[12], amen.

Men. A noble wish.

[*Re-enter* Aedile, *with* Citizens.]

Sic. Draw near, ye people.

Aed. List to your tribunes. Audience ! peace, I say !

1. uproar.
2. implementation.
3. happen.
4. anger.
5. annoyed; enraged.
6. controlled.
7. moderation.
8. nobles.
9. pray.
10. endure abuse.
11. to any extent.
12. be it so.

shout, let them not stop, but with a confused noise demand the immediate implementation of the punishment which we happen to suggest.

Officer. Very well.

Sicinius. Prepare them to receive with firmness and promptness, and to follow up with persistence, the hint we shall happen to give them.

Brutus. Go and put these instructions into effect. (*The* Officer *leaves*)

Stir up his anger without delay. He has been accustomed always to conquer and been allowed to contradict himself as much as he pleased. When he has once been angered, he cannot be restrained and he cannot then adopt a tone of moderation ; on such occasions he utters what he feels ; and that is what is likely, supported by what we shall do, to bring him to his death.

Sicinius. Well, here he comes.

(*Enter* Coriolanus, Menenius, *and* Cominius, *with* Senators *and the* nobles.)

Menenius. Speak to them gently, I do appeal to you.

Coriolanus. Yes, I must speak like a humble groom who will endure any amount of abuse for the smallest coin of money. May the honoured gods keep Rome in safety ; and the chairs of justice filled with deserving men ! May the gods plant goodwill among us ! May the gods fill our large temples with crowds of peaceful citizens and may they allow no fighting among the people in the streets !

First Senator. Be it so, be it so !

Menenius. You have expressed a noble wish.

(*Re-enter* Officer *with* Citizens.)

Sicinius. Draw near, you people.

Officer. Listen to your tribunes. Listen ! Silence, I say !

Cor. First, hear me speak.
Both Tri. Well, say. Peace, ho!

Cor. Shall I be charged no further than this present?
Must all *determine*[1] here?

1. come to an end.

Sic. I do demand,
If you submit you to the people's voices,
Allow their officers and are content
To suffer lawful *censure*[2] for such faults
As shall be proved *upon*[3] you?

2. condemnation.
3. against.

Cor. I am content.
Men. Lo, citizens, he says he is content:
The warlike service he has done, consider; think
Upon the wounds his body bears, which show
Like graves i' the holy churchyard.

Cor. Scratches with *briers*[4],
Scars to move laughter only.

4. thorns.

Men. Consider further,
That when he speaks not like a citizen,
You find him like a soldier: do not take
His rougher accents for malicious sounds,
But, as I say, such as become a soldier,
Rather than *envy you*[5].

5. ill-will towards you.

Com. Well, well, no more.

Cor. What is the matter
That being pass'd for consul with full voice,

Coriolanus. First, listen to what I have to say.

Both Tribunes. Well, speak. Let there be silence among the people.

Coriolanus. Shall I be charged with no further offence than has already been brought against me? May I take it for granted that this will be an end of the matter and that I shall not again be called upon to defend myself?

Sicinius. I do demand, if you are willing to accept the judgment of the people and acknowledge the authority vested in us, the tribunes, and if you are further prepared to accept the condemnation which may be pronounced upon you according to law for such faults as shall be proved against you.

Coriolanus. I accept this position.

Menenius. Lo, citizens, he says that he accepts this position. Take into consideration the military service he has rendered to the country during the wars. Take into consideration the wounds which he carries on his body and which bear testimony to his heroism just as tombstones in the holy churchyard bear testimony to the merits of those who lie buried beneath them.

Coriolanus. Probably my wounds will be treated by the people as mere bruises caused by thorns, and as mere scars which only excite mockery.

Menenius. Also take into consideration the fact that when he does not speak gently like a citizen, it is because he speaks like a soldier. Do not misinterpret his rough manner of speech as indicating any ill-will towards you; but, as I say, his rough manner of speech quite suits a soldier and is not to be taken as being a sign of hostility towards you.

Cominius. Well, well, there is no need to say more.

Coriolanus. What is the reason that, having been elected as consul with general consent, I am so

I am so dishonour'd that the very hour
You take it off again ?

Sic. Answer to us.

Cor. Say, then : 'tis true, I ought so.

Sic. We charge you, that you have *contrived*[1] to take
From Rome all season'd office and to wind
Yourself into a power tyrannical ;
For which you are a traitor to the people.

Cor. How ! traitor !

Men. Nay, *temperately*[2] ; your promise.

Cor. The fires i' the lowest hell *fold-in*[3] the people !
Call me their traitor ! Thou *injurious*[4] tribune !
Within thine eyes sat twenty thousand deaths,
In thy hands clutch'd as many millions, in
Thy lying tongue both numbers, I would say
"Thou liest" unto thee with a voice as free
As I do pray the gods.

Sic. *Mark*[5] you this, people ?

Citizens. To the rock, to the rock with him !

Sic. Peace !
We need not put new matter to his charge :
What you have seen him do and heard him speak,
Beating your officers, cursing yourselves,
Opposing laws with *strokes*[6] and here defying
Those whose great power must try him ; even this,

1. planned; plotted.
2. mildly.
3. wrap.
4. insulting
5. observe.
6. physical force.

disgraced that almost at the very time of the election you withdraw the votes which you gave me.

Sicinius. You have to answer the charges which we shall bring against you.

Coriolanus. Speak, then ; it is true that I have to answer those charges.

Sicinius. We bring against you the charge that you have plotted to take from the Romans the authority to which they have been accustomed, with the object of setting yourself up as an arbitrary dictator. By having done so, you have proved yourself a traitor to the people.

Coriolanus. What do you mean ? How dare you call me a traitor ?

Menenius. No, you must speak gently. Remember the promise you made to speak gently.

Coriolanus. May the people be enveloped in the fires of the lowest hell ! How dares he call me a traitor to the people ! You insulting tribune ! If within your eyes there sat twenty thousand deaths, if in thy hand were grasped firmly twenty million deaths, and if in your false tongue there were twenty thousand plus twenty million deaths, I would still say, "you have told a lie" with as frank a voice as the one in which I pray to the gods.

Sicinius. Do you observe the way he speaks, citizens ?

Citizens. Let us seize him and take him to the Tarpeian rock ; let us do so !

Sicinius. Silence ! We have no need to bring against him the fresh charges we had prepared. You have seen him doing certain things and have listened to the words he has spoken. He has beaten your officers ; he has cursed you, the people ; he has defied the laws with physical force ; and he has here challenged the authority of those who, by virtue o their high lawful position, had to sit in judgment

So criminal and in such *capital kind*[1],
Deserves the extremest death.

1. deserving death.

Bru. But since he hath
Served well for Rome,—

Cor. What do you *prate*[2] of service ?

2. chatter.

Bru. I talk of that, that know it.

Cor. You ?

Men. Is this the promise that you made your mother ?

Com. Know, I pray you,—

Cor. I'll know no further :

Let them pronounce the steep Tarpeian death,
Vagabond exile, *flaying*[3], *pent*[4] to linger
But with a grain a day, I would not buy
Their mercy at the price of one *fair*[5] word ;
Nor check my courage for what they can give,
To have't with saying "Good morrow."

3. stripping one of the skin.
4. imprisoned.
5. gentle.

Sic. For that he has,
As much as in him lies, from time to time
Envied against the people[6], seeking means
To pluck away their power, as now at last
Given hostile strokes, and that not in the presence
Of dreaded justice, but on the ministers
That do distribute it ; in the name o' the people

6. shown malice against the people.

upon him ; this alone being serious criminal conduct and of very grave nature, deserves the most cruel kind of death.

Brutus. But because he has rendered valuable services to Rome,—

Coriolanus. What business has a fellow like you to be chattering of service ?

Brutus. I speak about what I am competent to speak about.

Coriolanus. You, a fellow who has never taken part in fighting, in what way are you competent to talk of my service ?

Menenius. Is this the way to keep the promise which you made to your mother to speak gently ?

Cominius. Know, I pray you,—

Coriolanus. I will listen to no more protests from you. Let them sentence me to death by being thrown down the steep Tarpeian rock ; let them condemn me to banishment which will necessitate my wandering about from one place to another ; let them condemn me to merciless flogging ; let them sentence me to imprisonment to drag out a weary existence with only a single grain of corn to eat everyday ; but I am not prepared to seek their mercy by speaking to them a single gentle word ; nor am I prepared to put restrictions upon my freedom of speech for any favour they can grant, even if it were possible to win a favour from them by merely saying these two words, "good morning".

Sicinius. Because he has, as much as it was in his power to do so, from time to time shown hatred for the people by railing against them ; because he has been trying all possible methods to deprive the people of their power ; and finally because he has just now used physical force, not merely in the presence of dreaded justice, but against the very

And in the power of us the tribunes, we,
Even from this instant, banish him our city,
In peril of[1] *precipitation*[2]
From off the rock Tarpeian never more
To enter our Rome gates : i' the people's name,
I say it shall be so.

Citizens. It shall be so, it shall be so ; let him away :
He's banish'd, and it shall be so.

Com. Hear me, my masters, and my common friends,—

Sic. He's sentenced ; no more hearing.

Com. Let me speak :
I have been consul, and can show for Rome
Her enemies' marks upon me. I do love
My country's good with a respect more tender,
More holy and profound, than mine own life,
My dear wife's *estimate*[3], her *womb's increase*[4],
And treasure of my loins ; then if I would
Speak that,—

Sic. We know your *drift*[5]: speak what ?

Bru. There's no more to be said, but he is banish'd,
As enemy to the people and his country :
It shall be so.

Citizens. It shall be so, it shall be so.

Cor. You common cry of *curs*[6] ! whose breath I hate
As *reek*[7] o' the rotten fens, whose loves I prize
As the dead *carcasses*[8] of unburied men
That do corrupt my air, I banish you ;

1. on pain of ; at the risk of.
2. flinging down.
3. value (to me).
4. children.
5. point of the argument.
6. dogs.
7. foul.
8. dead bodies.

officers whose function it is to dispense justice ; in the name of the people and by virtue of the authority which we exercise as the tribunes, we banish him from our city from this very moment and we further warn him never to enter the gates of our Rome on pain of being flung down the Tarpeian rock ; in the people's name, I say it shall be so.

Citizens. It shall be so ; it shall be so ; let him leave the city. The sentence of banishment against him is accepted by us and it shall be enforced.

Cominius. Hear me, my masters, and my common friends,—

Sicinius He has been sentenced to banishment. There is no question of anybody hearing you now.

Cominius. Let me speak. Once I was the consul and I still have on my body the scars left by the wounds I suffered while fighting against the enemies of Rome. I do love my country's welfare with a respect more tender, more sacred and more deep than I love my own life, than the rate at which I value my dear wife, and than the love I have for the precious children to whom my wife has given birth and who have been begotten by me ; then if I would speak that,—

Sicinius. We know what you are driving at ; what do you want to speak ?

Brutus. There is no more to be said except that Marcius has been banished. He is an enemy to the people and to his country. The sentence of banishment against him must be enforced.

Citizens. Yes, it must be enforced. He must be banished.

Coriolanus. You pack of worthless hounds ! I hate your breath as I hate the foul vapours from decaying fens ; I value your love and goodwill no more than I value the corpses of unburied men which do poison the air I breathe ; I banish *you* and condemn you to remain here in a state of uncertain-

And here remain with your uncertainty !
Let every feeble rumour shake your hearts !
Your enemies, with nodding of their *plumes*[1],
Fan you into despair ! Have the power *still*
To banish your defenders ; till at length
Your ignorance, which finds not till it feels,
Making not reservation of yourselves,
Still your own foes, deliver you as most
Abated[2] *captives*[3] to some nation
That won you without blows ! *Despising*[4]
For you[5], the city, thus I turn my back :
There is a world elsewhere.

1. feathers on helmets.
2. humbled and dejected.
3. prisoners ; slaves.
4. hating.
5. because of you.

[*Exeunt* CORIOLANUS, COMINIUS, MENENIUS, Senators, *and* Patricians.

Aed. The people's enemy is gone, is gone !

Citizens. Our enemy is banish'd ! he is gone !
Hoo[6] ! hoo ! [*They all shout, and throw up their caps.*

6. exclamation of joy.

Sic. Go, see him out at gates, and follow him,
As he hath follow'd you, with all *despite*[7] ;
Give him deserved *vexation*[8]. Let a guard
Attend us through the city.

7. contemptuous hatred.
8. annoyance.

Citizens. Come, come ; let's see him out at gates; come.
The gods preserve our noble tribunes ! Come.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV, SCENE I

Rome. Before a gate of the city.

[*Enter* CORIOLANUS, VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, MENENIUS, COMINIUS, *with the young Nobility*[9] *of Rome.*]

Cor. Come, leave your tears : a brief farewell : the beast

9. nobles.

ty. May your hearts be agitated with fear at the slightest rumour ! May the mere sight of your enemies' plumes waving in the breeze cause you to shiver with despair ! May you, who are ever your own enemies, retain the authority to banish those who can protect and defend you till at last your ignorance, of which you will become aware only after bitter suffering and which will have evil consequences for yourselves as well as for others, will deliver you as humbled slaves to some nation which will conquer you without even taking the trouble of making a war upon you ! Full of hatred for this city of which you are the inhabitants, I thus turn my back upon it. The world is large enough to accommodate me.

(Coriolanus, Cominius, Menenius, Senators *and the* nobles *leave*.)

Officer. The enemy of the people is gone ! He is gone !

Citizens. Our enemy has been banished ! He has left. Hurrah ! Hurrah ! [*They all shout and joyfully throw up their caps*.]

Sicinius. Go, see him leaving the gates of the city, follow him as he has followed you with every mark of hatred. Try to irritate and annoy him as he deserves to be irritated and annoyed. Let a guard accompany us through the city.

Citizens. Come, come ; let us see him going out of the gates of the city ; come. May the gods defend and protect our noble tribunes, come.

(*They all leave*.)

ACT IV, SCENE I

Rome. Before a gate of the city.

(*Enter* Coriolanus, Volumnia, Virgilia, Menenius, Cominius, *with the young nobles of Rome*.)

Coriolanus. Come, shed no more tears. Let us exchange a brief farewell. The many-headed monster,

With many heads *butts*[1] me away; Nay, mother,
Where is your ancient courage ? you were *used*[2]
To say *extremity*[3] was the *trier*[4] of spirits ;
That common chances common men could bear ;
That when the sea was calm all boats alike
Show'd mastership in floating ; fortune's blows,
When most struck home, being gentle wounded, *craves*[5]
A noble *cunning*[6] : you were used to load me
With *precepts*[7] that would make invincible
The heart that *conn'd*[8] them.

Vir. O heavens ! O heavens !

Cor. Nay, I *prithee*[9], woman,—

Vol. Now the red *pestilence*[10] strike all trades in Rome,
And occupations perish !

Cor. What, what, what !
I shall be loved when I am lack'd. Nay, mother,
Resume that spirit, when you were *wont*[11] to say,
If you had been the wife of *Hercules*[12],
Six of his labours you'ld have done, and saved
Your husband so much sweat. Cominius,
Droop not ; *adieu*[13]. Farewell, my wife, my mother :
I'll do well yet. Thou old and true Menenius,
Thy tears are salter than a younger man's,
And *venomous*[14] to thine eyes. My sometime general,
I have seen thee stern, and thou hast oft beheld

1. pushes.
2. accustomed.
3. misfortune.
4. test.
5. demands.
6. skill ; knowledge.
7. pieces of advice.
8. learnt.
9. pray you.
10. plague.
11. accustomed.
12. an ancient hero.
13. farewell.
14. injurious.

the multitude, pushes me out of the city. No, do not weep, mother ; where is the courage you used to show in the past ? You used to say that the most evil circumstances were a test of human courage ; that common happenings could be endured by common people ; that when the weather over the sea was calm, all boats showed themselves well capable of keeping afloat ; that, when the blows of misfortune strike human beings with the most deadly force, then to bear the wounds with calmness demands the exercise of the noblest wisdom. You were in the habit of glutting me with wise sayings and maxims that could harden and make unconquerable the heart which learnt them.

Virgilia. O, heavens ! O heavens !

Coriolanus. No, I pray you, woman, show patience.

Volumnia. May now the red plague afflict all trades in Rome and may all business come to an end !

Coriolanus. What are you talking ? Have patience. People will begin to love me when I am no longer here and when they feel the want of me. No, mother, recover that courage which you used to show when you said that, if you had been the wife of Hercules (a Greek hero), you would have accomplished half of the twelve labours which were imposed upon him, and thus saved your husband half the exertion. Cominius, do not look sad, farewell. Farewell, my wife and mother ; there will still be time for me to mend my fortune. You old and faithful Menenius, it is harder for you to have to weep than for a younger man, and your tears will be harmful to your eye-sight. My former commander, I have known your sternness, and you have often seen sights which render the heart callous ; tell these sorrowing women that it is as foolish to lament inevitable blows of fortune as it is to laugh at them. My mother, you know well that the dangers I have

Heart-hardening spectacles ; tell these sad women
'Tis *fond*[1] to *wail*[2] inevitable *strokes*[3],
As 'tis to laugh at 'em. My mother, you wot well
My *hazards*[4] *still*[5] have been your *solace*[6] : and
Believe't not lightly—though I go alone,
Like to a lonely dragon, that his fen
Makes fear'd and talk'd of more than seen—your son
Will or exceed the common or be caught
With *cautelous*[7] baits and *practice*[8].

Vol. My first son,
Whither wilt thou go ? Take good Cominius
With thee awhile : determine on some course,
More than a wild *exposture*[9] to each chance
That starts i' the way before thee.

Cor. O the gods !

Com. I'll follow thee a month, devise with thee
Where thou shalt rest, that thou mayst hear of us
And we of thee : so if the time thrust forth
A cause for thy *repeal*[10], we shall not send
O'er the vast world to seek a single man,
And lose *advantage*[11], which doth ever cool
I' the absence of the needer.

Cor. Fare ye well :
Thou hast years upon thee ; and thou art too full
Of the wars' *surfeits,*[12] to go *rove*[13] with one
That's yet unbruised : bring me but out at gate.

1. foolish.
2. lament.
3. blows (of destiny)
4. risks.
5. always.
6. comfort.
7. cunning.
8. plot.
9. exposure
10. re-call.
11. favourable opportunity.
12. unlimited experiences.
13. wander.

faced have always been a source of comfort and pride for you; and though I go alone like a lonely dragon who, because of his hiding himself in his marshy retreat, is more feared and talked of than if he showed himself more frequently, yet I want you to believe firmly that your son will show himself something more than an ordinary man, unless he falls a victim to cunning schemes and plots. (Although I am going alone into banishment, I will not be forgotten and despised but will be more talked of and more feared than if I were to be seen in the city, even as a lonely dragon, who lives alone in his marshy abode, is more feared and talked of than if he were to be seen frequently; and I assure you that your son will yet prove his exceptional merits unless he is trapped by cunning people who may use their schemes and plots against him.)

Volumnia. Noblest and most eminent of men, where will you go? Take good Cominius with you for some time. Decide on some course of action more definite than that of recklessly exposing yourself to every mischance that may suddenly show itself in your path.

Coriolanus. O, the gods!

Cominius. I will accompany you for a month, and discuss with you where you ought to live, so that you may receive news from us and we may get news from you, and so that, if circumstances should suddenly give us an opportunity of recalling you, we should not have to send messengers all over the world in search of a single individual and thus lose the favourable opportunity which always quickly vanishes when he, who should make use of it, is absent from the scene.

Coriolanus. Farewell; you are advanced in age: and you have endured the ordeal of wars to such an extent that it is not possible for you to go wandering in the company of one who is comparatively still vigorous and unhurt. Just come with me to

Come, my sweet wife, my dearest mother, and
My friends of *noble touch*[1], when I am forth,
Bid me farewell, and smile. I pray you, come.
While I remain above the ground, you shall
Hear from me *still*[2], and never of me *aught*[3]
But what is like me formerly.

1. tested nobility.
2. always.
3. anything.

Men. That's worthily
As any ear can hear. Come, let's not weep.
If I could shake off but one seven years
From these old arms and legs, by the good gods,
I'll with thee[4] every foot.

Cor. Give me thy hand :
Come. [*Exeunt.*

4. I would go with you.

SCENE II

The same. A street near the gate.

[*Enter* SICINIUS, BRUTUS, *and an Aedile*[5].]

Sic. Bid them all home ; he's gone, and we'll no further.
The nobility are *vex'd*[6], whom we see have sided
In his behalf.

5. assistant to the tribunes.
6. annoyed.

Bru. Now we have shown our power,
Let us seem humbler after it is done
Than when it was a-doing.

Sic. Bid them home :
Say their great enemy is gone, and they
Stand in their ancient strength.

Bru. Dismiss them home. [*Exit* Aedile.
Here comes his mother.

Sic. Let's not meet her.

the gate where I shall leave you. Come, my sweet wife, my dearest mother, and my friends of proved nobility, when I leave the gate, bid me farewell and smile. I pray you, come. As long as I am alive, you will get news of me from me, and you will never hear anything but what is in keeping with my life up to now.

Menenius. And the manner of your life has been as noble as words can express. Come, let us not shed tears. If I could become younger by only a short period of seven years, I swear by the good gods that I would accompany you wherever you might go. (If I could only shed so short a period as seven years from my old arms and legs, I swear by the good gods that I would accompany you wherever you might go.)

Coriolanus. Give me your hand. Come. (*They all leave*).

ACT IV SCENE II

The same. A street near the gate.

(*Enter* Sicinius, Brutus, *and an* Officer.)

Scinius. Tell them to go home ; he is gone, and we will proceed no further in the matter. (And we will rest content with things as they are.) The nobles, whom we have seen taking his side and supporting his case, are annoyed with us.

Brutus. Now that we have shown our power, let us show ourselves more moderate after we have achieved our object than we were while trying to achieve that object.

Sicinius. Tell them to go home. Say that their chief enemy is gone and that they have now recovered their traditional power.

Brutus. Tell them to disperse and go home. (*The* Officer leaves.) Here comes his mother.

Sicinius. Let us not meet her.

Bru. Why?

Sic. They say she's mad.

Bru. They have *ta'en note of us*[1] : keep on your way.

[*Enter* VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, *and* MENENIUS.]

Vol. O, ye're well met : the *hoarded*[2] plague o' the gods
Requite[3] your love !

Men. Peace, peace ; be not so loud.

Vol. If that I could for weeping, you should hear,—
Nay, and you shall hear some. [*To* BRUTUS] Will you be gone ?

Vir. [*To* SICINIUS] You shall stay too : I would I had the power
To say so to my husband.

Sic. Are you mankind ?

Vol. Ay, fool ; is that a shame ? Note but this fool.
Was not a man my father ? Hadst thou *foxship*[4]
To banish him that struck more blows for Rome
Than thou hast spoken words ?

Sic. O blessed heavens !

Vol. *Moe*[5] noble blows than ever thou wise words;
And for Rome's good. I'll tell thee what ; yet go :
Nay, but thou shalt stay too : I *would*[6] my son

1. seen us.
2. accumulated.
3. reward (here, punish).
4. cunning and meanness.
5. more.
6. wish.

Brutus. Why?

Sicinius. They say that she has gone mad.

Brutus. We have already been noticed by them; now let us meet them boldly.

(*Enter* Volumnia, Virgilia, *and* Menenius)

Volumnia. O, it is a good thing that we have met you. May you be punished for the goodwill you have shown to my son with all the plagues which the gods have accumulated to inflict upon those who deserve their special vengeance!

Menenius. Silence, silence; do not speak in such a loud voice.

Volumnia. If tears were not to hinder my words, you should hear a lot from me. But even so you shall hear something. (*To* Brutus.) Do you think you can escape from me?

Virgilia. (*To* Sicinius.) You must also stay. I wish I had the power to ask my husband to stay here.

Sicinius. Do you think that you are mankind? (Do you think yourself to be some special specimen of mankind?)

Volumnia. Yes, you fool; is that a matter to be ashamed of? Just listen to this idiot. Was not my father a member of mankind? Did you have meanness and cunning enough to banish Coriolanus who struck more blows in the defence of Rome than the words you have spoken in your whole life?

Sicinius. O, blessed heavens!

Volumnia. He struck more noble blows than any wise words that you may have ever spoken; and he did so for the welfare of Rome. I will tell you what; but I will let you go. No, but you must stay to hear me. I wish my son were in Arabia with his dependable sword in his hand and with you and your supporters before him. (I wish

Were in Arabia, and thy tribe before him,
His good sword in his hand.

Sic. What then ?
Vir. What then ?
He'ld make an end of ***thy posterity***[1].

Vol. Bastards and all.
Good man, the wounds that he does bear for Rome !

Men. Come, come, peace.
Sic. I ***would***[2] he had continued to his country
As he began, and not unknit himself
The noble knot he made.

Bru. I would he had.
Vol. "I would he had !" 'Twas you ***incensed***[3] the ***rabble***[4] :
Cats, that can judge as fitly of his worth
As I can of those mysteries which heaven
Will not have earth to know.

Bru. Pray, let us go.
Vol. Now, pray, sir, get you gone :
You have done a brave deed. ***Ere***[5] you go, hear this :
As far as doth the Capitol exceed
The meanest house in Rome, so far my son—
This lady's husband here, this, do you see—
Whom you have banish'd, does exceed you all.

Bru. Well, well, we'll leave you.
Sic. Why stay we to be ***baited***[6]
With one that wants her wits ?

1. your future generations.
2. wish.
3. enraged; instigated
4. mob of common people.
5. before.
6. worried ; bothered.

you and your supporters were to meet my son, armed with his dependable sword, in some desolate place like Arabia where no help could come to save you.)

Sicinius. What will happen then ?

Virgilia. What will happen then, you ask ? He will slaughter all of you, leaving no trace of you for the future ages to see.

Volumnia. You bastards and all. To think of the services which he, noble as he is, has rendered to his country !

Menenius. Come, come ; silence.

Sicinius. I wish he had continued to serve his country in the way in which he began and I wish that he had not undone the noble work he had done by serving the people.

Brutus. I too have the same wish.

Volumnia. What hypocrisy on your part to express this wish ! It was you who instigated the crowd against him. The crowd consists of people who are no better than cats and who can judge his worth as little as I can judge those divine mysteries which God does not permit mortals on earth to understand.

Brutus. Pray let us go.

Volumnia. Now, pray, sir, be off with you as fast as you can. Indeed, you have accomplished a heroic deed ! Before you go, hear this : just as the building of the Capitol far exceeds the humblest house in Rome in worth and dignity, so my son, the husband of this lady here whom you see, surpasses you all in worth and dignity, even though you have banished him.

Brutus. Well, well, we will leave you.

Sicinius. Why should we stay to be worried and harassed by one who has lost her wits ?

Vol. Take my prayers with you.
[*Exeunt* Tribunes.

I would the gods had nothing else to do
But to confirm my curses ! Could I meet 'em
But once a-day, it would *unclog*[1] my heart
Of what lies heavy to't.

Men. You have told them home ;
And, *by my troth*[2], you have cause. You 'll sup with me ?

Vol. Anger's my meat ; I sup upon myself,
And so shall starve with feeding. Come, let's go :
Leave this faint *puling*[3] and lament as I do,
In anger, Juno-like. Come, come, come.

Men. *Fie, fie, fie*[4] ! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III

A highway[5] *between Rome and Antium.*

[*Enter a* Roman *and a* Volsce, *meeting.*]

Rom. I know you well, sir, and you know me : your name, I think, is Adrian.

Vols. It is so, sir : truly, I have forgot you.

Rom. I am a Roman ; and my services are, as you are, against 'em : know you me yet ?

Vols. Nicanor ? no.

Rom. The same, sir.

Vols. You had more beard when I last saw you ;

1. relieve ; ease.
2. in truth.
3. whimpering.
4. expression of disapproval.
5. road.

Volumnia. Take with you my prayers for your ruin. (*The* tribunes *leave.*)

I wish the gods had nothing else to do but to confirm my curses on these tribunes! If I could meet these tribunes just once everyday, I would be able to relieve my heart of the burden which lies heavily on it.

Menenius. Your words have surely touched them to their hearts (You have spoken in such a way as to produce the desired effect on them) And, I swear by my honour, that you have good reason to have spoken thus. Will you eat with me ?

Volumnia. Anger is my food. I shall feed myself with my bitter thoughts, and having that kind of food 1 shall starve. Come, let us go. Give up your feeble, childish complaining, and let your grief be expressed in anger such as I give vent to in the manner of Juno (the proud wife of Jupiter.) Come, come, come.

Menenius. I strongly disapprove of your mode of expressing your grief through anger. (*They leave.*)

ACT IV SCENE III

(*A highway between Rome and Antium.*)

(*Enter a* Roman *and a* Volsce, *meeting.*)

Roman. I know you well, sir, and you know me. I think your name is Adrian.

Volsce. Yes, sir, my name is surely Adrian. Indeed, I have forgotten who you are.

Roman. I am a Roman, ; and my services, like yours, are now directed against my countrymen. Do you not yet know me ?

Volsce. Are you Nicanor ? Surely, it cannot be so.

Roman. Yes, sir, I am no other than Nicanor.

Volsce. You had a bigger beard when I saw

but your *favour*[2] is well *approved*[3] by your tongue. What's the news in Rome? I have a note from the Volscian state, to find you out there: you have well saved me a day's journey.

1. appearance; identity.
2. proved.

Rom. There hath been in Rome strange *insurrections*[4]; the people against the senators, *patricians*[5], and nobles.

3. revolts.
4. nobles.

Vols. Hath been! is it ended, then? Our state thinks not so: they are in a most warlike preparation, and hope to come upon them in the heat of their *division*[6].

5. civil war.

Rom. The main *blaze*[7] of it is past, but a small thing would make it flame again: for the nobles receive so to heart the banishment of that worthy Coriolanus, that they are in a ripe aptness to take all power from the people and to pluck from them their tribunes for ever. This lies glowing, I can tell you, and is almost mature for the violent breaking out.

6. flare-up.

Vols. Coriolanus banished!

Rom. Banished, sir.

Vols. You will be welcome with this *intelligence*[1], Nicanor.

7. news.

Rom. The day serves well for them now. Your noble Tullus Aufidius will appear well in these wars, his great opposer, Coriolanus, being now *in no request*[2] of his country.

8. in no demand.

Vols. He cannot choose. I am most fortunate, thus accidentally to encounter you: you have ended my business, and I will merrily accompany you home.

Rom. I shall, between this and supper, tell you

you last time, but your identity is well proved by your voice. What is the news in Rome? I have a note from the Volscian authorities directing me to trace you in Rome. It is good that you have saved me a day's journey by meeting me here.

Roman. There have been in Rome strange risings; the people have rebelled against the senators, the members of the nobility, and the aristocracy.

Volsce. There *have been* risings! Have they ended, then? The authorities in our country think that they have not ended. They have made full preparations for another war and hope to invade Rome when the civil war there is still in a blaze.

Roman. The main fury of the civil war is over, but a small incident will stir it again; because the nobles have so deeply felt the banishment of that worthy Coriolanus that they are fully in the mood to snatch away all power from the people and to remove their tribunes for ever. The fire of discord is still alive in Rome, and I can tell you, is almost ready to blaze up and take a violent turn.

Volsce. Has Coriolanus been banished?

Roman. Yes, sir, he has been banished.

Volsce. You will be welcome with this news, Nicanor.

Roman. Now is the opportunity for the Volscians to utilise. Your noble Tullus Aufidius will give a good account of himself in these wars because his great opponent Coriolanus is no longer valued by his country and will not fight against him.

Volsce. Yes, Tullus Aufidius has no alternative now but to give a good account of himself. I am most lucky to have met you thus by accident. You have enabled me to complete my mission, and I will now accompany you home in a care-free manner.

Roman. I will, between now and the time of

most strange things from Rome; all tending to the good of their *adversaries*[1]. Have you an army ready, say you?

Vols. A most royal one; the *centurions*[2] and their charges, distinctly *billeted*[3], already in the entertainment, and to be on foot at an hour's warning.

Rom. I am joyful to hear of their readiness, and am the man, I think, that shall set them in present action. So, sir, heartily well met, and most glad of your company.

Vols. You take my part from me, sir; I have the most cause to be glad of yours.

Rom. Well, let us go together. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV

Antium. Before AUFIDIUS'S *house.*

[*Enter* CORIOLANUS *in mean apparel, disguised and muffled.*]

Cor. A *goodly*[4] city is this Antium. City,
'Tis I that made thy widows: many an heir
Of these fair *edifices*[5] *'fore my wars*[6]
Have I heard groan and drop: then know me not,
Lest that thy wives with spits, and boys with stones
In puny battle slay me.

[*Enter a* Citizen.]

Save you, sir.

Cit. And you.

1. opponents.

2. officers in charge of a company of a hundred soldiers each.

3. assigned. to quarters

4. beautiful.

5. buildings.

6. in the presence of my wars.

supper, give you an account of the extremely strange things that have happened in Rome, all those things favouring the opponents of Rome. Did you say that the Volscian army is ready?

Volsce. A most royal army has been assembled. The centurions and those under them, at the various quarters assigned to them, have already been enrolled, and have orders to be ready to march within an hour of the sounding of the trumpet.

Roman. I am very glad to hear of their readiness and I think I am the man who shall be instrumental in setting the army into action with the news I have brought. So, sir, I am heartily glad to have met you and am most glad to have your company.

Volsce. Sir, that is what I wanted to say to you. (Sir, it is rather I who have reason to be glad.) I have the most cause to be glad to have your company.

Roman. Well, let us go together. (*They leave.*)

ACT IV SCENE IV

Antium. Before Aufidius's house.

(*Enter* Coriolanus *in mean clothes, disguised and muffled.*)

Coriolanus. This Antium is an excellent city. City, it is I who was responsible for turning many of your women into widows. During the wars I fought here, I have seen confronting me many men who would have inherited these beautiful buildings, and I have heard them groaning with the pain of their wounds and then seen them dropping dead. I call upon you, O, city, not to recognise me lest your wives should arm themselves with iron rods and boys should arm themselves with stones to kill me in a battle such as it would be a disgrace to die in. (*Enter a* Citizen.) God save you, sir.

Citizen. And may God save you, too.

Cor. Direct me, if it be your will,
Where great Aufidius lies : is he in Antium ?

Cit. He is, and feasts the nobles of the state
At his house this night.

Cor. Which is his house, *beseech*[1] you ?
Cit. This, here before you.

Cor. Thank you, sir ; farewell.
[*Exit* Citizen.

O world, *thy slippery turns*[2] ! Friends now fast sworn,
Whose double bosoms seem to wear one heart,
Whose hours, whose bed, whose meal, and exercise,
Are still together, who twin, as 'twere, in love
Unseparable, shall within this hour,
On a *dissension*[3] *of a doit*[4], break out
To bitterest enmity ; so, *fellest*[5] foes,
Whose passions and whose plots have *broke*[6] their sleep
To take the one the other, by some chance,
Some trick *not worth an egg*[7], shall grow dear friends
And *interjoin*[8] their *issues*[9]. So with me :
My birthplace hate I, and my love's upon
This enemy town. I'll enter : if he slay me,
He does fair justice ; if he give me way,
I'll do his country service. [*Exit.*

1. pray.
2. your sudden changes.
3. dispute.
4. over a small matter (doit --a small coin).
5. fiercest.
6. broken.
7. trivial.
8. intermarry.
9. children.

Coriolanus. Direct me, if you will be so good, to the place where great Aufidius stays. Is he in Antium ?

Citizen. Yes, he is in Antium and he has invited the nobles of the state to a feast tonight at his house.

Coriolanus. Which is his house, I pray you ?

Citizen. This very house is his, the one before which you are standing.

Coriolanus. Thank you, sir, farewell.

(*The* Citizen *leaves.*)

O world, how sudden are your changes ! (O world, how suddenly and quickly men pass from one condition to another ?) Friends, who at one moment are bound to each other by the firmest pledges, who seem to carry a single heart in two different bosoms, who spend all their time together, go to bed together, take their meals together, and take their exercise together, who seem to be twins in love and are inseparable, shall at the very same hour (at which they were inseparable) become the bitterest enemies of each other over a difference of the smallest nature. In the same way, the fiercest enemies, whose sleep during nights has been broken by the fury of their anger and by their plots to destroy each other, shall grow dear friends because of some chance, or some slight accident, absolutely trivial in itself, and shall become so intimate as to allow their children to inter-marry. The same is the case with me. I hate my birth-place, and my love is now given to this town which should naturally be hostile to me. I will enter the house of Aufidius. If Aufidius kills me, he will be doing fair justice. If he entertains my proposal, I will do some service to his country in return.

SCENE V

The same. A hall in AUFIDIUS'S *house.*

[*Music plays. Enter a* Servingman.]

First Serv. Wine, wine, wine! What service is here! I think our fellews are asleep. [*Exit.*

[*Enter a second* Servingman.]

Sec. Serv. Where's Cotus? my master calls for him. Cotus! [*Exit.*

[*Enter* CORIOLANUS.]

Cor. A *goodly*[1] house: the feast smells well; but I
Appear not[2] like a guest.

[*Re-enter the first* Servingman.]

First Serv. What would you have, friend? *whence*[3] are you?
Here's no place for you: pray, go to the door. [*Exit.*

Cor. I have deserved no better *entertainment*[4],
In being Coriolanus.

[*Re-enter second* Servingman.]

Sec. Serv. Whence are you, sir? Has the porter his eyes in his head, that he gives entrance to such *companions*[5]? Pray, get you out.

Cor. Away!

Sec. Serv. Away! get you away.

Cor. Now thou'rt troublesome.

Sec. Serv. Are you so brave? I'll have you talked with *anon*[6].

1. beautiful.
2. am not dressed.
3. from where.
4. treatment.
5. low fellows.
6. immediately.

ACT IV SCENE V

The same. A hall in Aufidius's house.

Music plays. Enter a Servant.

First Servant. Wine, wine, wine! What lazy fellows are they that are in attendance here? I think our fellows are asleep. (*He leaves.*)

(*Enter a second Servant.*)

Second Servant. Where is Cotus? My master calls for him. Cotus! (*He leaves*)

(*Enter* Coriolanus.)

Coriolanus. This is an impressive house. The smell coming from the feast is appetizing; but I am not dressed like a guest. (I will not be treated as a guest.)

(*Re-enter the first Servant.*)

First Servant. What is your business here, friend? Where do you come from? There is no room for you here. Pray, leave the house.

(*The Servant leaves.*)

Coriolanus. I have deserved no better treatment than I have received, having obtained the title of Coriolanus by having plundered and conquered the city of Corioli.

(*Re-enter the second Servant.*)

Second Servant. Where have you come from, sir? Does the porter at the gate not use his eyes while admitting persons when he allows low fellows like you to enter? Pray, get out of this place.

Coriolanus. Go away yourself.

Second Servant. You are asking me to go away? Get you gone from here.

Coriolanus. Now you are becoming a nuisance.

Second Servant. Are you so brave as to talk to me like that? I will at once find somebody who can talk to you in a manner that will produce the desired effect.

[*Enter a third* Servingman. *The first meets him.*]

Third Serv. What fellow's this ?

First Serv. A strange one as ever I looked on: I cannot get him out o' the house : ***prithee***[1], call my master to him. [*Retires.*

1. pray you

Third Serv. What have you to do here, fellow ? Pray you, ***avoid***[2] the house.

2. get out of.

Cor. Let me but stand ; I will not hurt your hearth.

Third Serv. What are you ?

Cor. A gentleman.

Third Serv. A marvellous poor one.

Cor. True, so I am.

Third Serv. Pray you, poor gentleman, take up some other station ; here's no place for you ; pray you, ***avoid***[3] : come.

3. leave.

Cor. Follow your ***function***[4], go, and ***batten on***[5] cold bits. [*Pushes him away.*

4. usual occupation.
5. grow fat on.

Third Serv. What, you will not ? Prithee, tell my master what a strange guest he has here.

Sec. Serv. And I shall. [*Exit.*

Third Serv. Where dwellest thou ?

Cor. Under the ***canopy***[6].

6. open sky.

Third Serv. Under the canopy !

Cor. Ay.

Third Serv. Where's that ?

Cor. I' the city of kites and crows.

(*Enter a third Servant. The first Servant meets him.*)

Third Servant. Who is this fellow ?

First Servant. He is the strangest fellow I have ever seen. He refuses to leave the house. I pray you, tell my master to deal with him. (*He withdraws.*)

Third Servant. What is your business here, fellow ? Pray you, get out of the house.

Coriolanus. Just allow me to stand here ; I will do no injury to your house-hold.

Third Servant. Who are you ?

Coriolanus. I am a gentleman.

Third Servant. A wonderfully poor gentleman.

Coriolanus. True, you have correctly described me.

Third Servant. Pray you, poor gentleman, find some other place ; there is no room for you here ; pray you, get out of here. Come along.

Coriolanus. Go from here and follow your usual occupation of feasting on scraps from your master's table and thus getting fat. (*He pushes the Servant away.*)

Third Servant. What, will you not leave ? I pray you, tell my master what a queer guest has arrived in his house.

Second Servant. And I certainly will go and tell my master. (*He leaves.*)

Third Servant. Where do you live ?

Coriolanus. Under the sky ?

Third Servant. Under the sky ?

Coriolanus. Yes.

Third Servant. Where is that ?

Coriolanus. In the open air where the kites and crows fly.

Third Serv. I' the city of kites and crows! What an ass it is. Then thou dwellest with daws too?

Cor. No, I serve not thy master.

Third Serv. How, sir? do you *meddle with*[1] my master?

1. have business with.

Cor. Ay; 'tis an honester service than to meddle with thy mistress.
Thou *pratest*[2] and pratest; serve with thy *trencher*[3],
hence[4]! [*Beats him away*
[*Exit third* Servingman.

2. chatter uselessly.
3. dish; plate.
4. away from here.

[*Enter* AUFIDIUS *with the second* Servingman.]

Auf. Where is this fellow?

Sec. Serv. Here, sir: I'ld have beaten him like a dog, but for disturbing the lords within. [*Retires.*

Auf. *Whence*[5] comest thou? what wouldst thou? thy name?
Why speak'st not? speak, man: what's thy name?

5. from where.

Cor. [*Unmuffling*[6]] If, Tullus,
Not yet thou knowest me, and, seeing me, dost not
Think me for the man I am, necessity
Commands me name myself.

6. uncovering.

Auf. What is thy name?

Cor. A name unmusical to the Volscians' ears,
And harsh in sound to thine.

Third Servant. In the open air where the kites and crows fly ! What an idiot you are ! Does it mean then that you live in the company of daws also. (Do you also live in the company of chattering fellows ?)

Coriolanus. No, I am not a fellow like you in the service of your master.

Third Servant. What do you mean, sir ? Have you business with our master that you pretend to be so much above me ?

Coriolanus. Yes ; my business here is nobler and more respectable than to try to make love to your mistress. You are only wasting your time in chattering in this way. Go and serve food in the dishes, because that is your function. Go from here. (*He beats the servant and drives him away.*) *The third Servant disappears.*)

(*Enter* Aufidius *with the second Servant.*)

Aufidius. Where is this fellow you have told me about ?

Second servant. Here he is, sir. 1 would have given him a sound beating as is given to a dog, if I had not been afraid of disturbing the honoured guests inside. (*The second Servant withdraws.*)

Aufidius. Where have you come from ? What is your business here ? What is your name ? Why do you not speak ? Come, speak, man. What is your name ?

Coriolanus. (*Un-covering himself*) Tullus, if you have not yet recognised me and, even after seeing me do not yet know my identity, then I feel compelled by necessity to mention my name.

Aufidius. Yes, tell me your name.

Coriolanus. I have a name most un-welcome to the ears of the Volscians, a name that has a jarring sound for your ears.

Auf. Say, what's thy name ?
Thou hast a *grim*[2] appearance, and thy face
Bears a command in't ; though thy *tackle's torn*[2],
Thou show'st *a noble vessel*[3] : what's thy name ?

Cor. Prepare thy brow to frown : know'st thou me yet ?

Auf. I know thee not : thy name ?

Cor. My name is Caius Marcius, who hath done
To thee particularly and to all the Volsces
Great hurt and mischief ; thereto witness may
My *surname*[4], Coriolanus : the painful service,
The extreme dangers and the drops of blood
Shed for my thankless country are *requited*[5]
But with that surname ; a good *memory*[6],
And witness of the malice and displeasure
Which thou shouldst bear me : only that name remains ;
The cruelty and *envy*[7] of the people,
Permitted by our *dastard*[8] nobles, who
Have all *forsook*[9] me, hath devour'd the rest ;
And *suffer'd*[10] me by the voice of slaves to be
Whoop'd out[11] of Rome. Now this *extremity*[12]
Hath brought me to thy hearth ; not out of hope—
Mistake me not—to save my life, for if
I had fear'd death, of all the men i' the world
I would have 'voided thee, but in mere spite,
To be full quit of[13] those my banishers,
Stand I before thee here. Then if thou hast
A heart of *wreak*[14] in thee, that wilt revenge
Thine own particular wrongs and stop those maims
Of shame seen through thy country, speed thee straight,
And make my misery serve thy turn : so use it

1. stern.
2. clothes are torn.
3. noble looks.
4. title.
5. rewarded
6. memorial.
7. ill-will.
8. cowardly.
9. deserted.
10. allowed.
11. drlven out.
12. misfortune.
13. to revenge myself fully.
14. revenge ; resentment.

Aufidius. Speak out your name. You have a a stern appearance and your face is that of a man possessing authority. Though your clothes are worn out, your looks are noble. What is your name ?

Coriolanus. Get ready to wear an angry frown on your forehead. Have you not yet recognised me ?

Aufidius. I do not know who you are ; tell me your name.

Coriolanus. My name is Caius Marcius who has done to you in particular and to all the Volscians great injury and mischief. My title Coriolanus supports the claim I have made. This title is the only reward which my ungrateful country gave to me for the painful services I rendered to her, for the great dangers I ran into, and for the drops of blood I shed for her sake. This title is a good memorial which will serve to remind you of the ill-will and displeasure you should feel for me. I am left only with this title. Everything else that I had has been taken away from me by the cruelty and the hatred of the people who were permitted by our cowardly nobles thus to treat me, nobles who have all deserted me and who have allowed me to be driven out of Rome with shouts of hatred and contempt by the common fellows. Now the critical condition, in which I am, has brought me to your household. But do not misunderstand me ; I have not come to you with any hope that you will save my life, because if I had been afraid of death, I should have avoided you more than anybody else in this world. I have come to you with utter hatred for those who banished me and I stand before you here with the object of fully avenging myself on them. If you have a heart full of resentment so as to desire revenge for the particular wrongs you suffered and for the shameful losses which were suffered by the whole of your country and signs of which are still visible, then make haste and convert my misfortune to good account for yourself and your

That my revengeful services may prove
As benefits to thee, for I will fight
Against my *canker'd*[1] country with the *spleen*[2]
Of all the under fiends. But if so be
Thou darest not this and that to prove more fortunes
Thou'rt tired, then, in a word, I also am
Longer to live most weary, and present
My throat to thee and to thy ancient malice;
Which not to cut would show thee but a fool,
Since I have ever follow'd thee with hate,
Drawn tuns of blood out of thy country's breast,
And cannot live but to thy shame, unless
It be to do thee service.

Auf. O Marcius, Marcius!
Each word thou hast spoke hath *weeded*[3] from my heart
A root of ancient envy. If *Jupiter*[4]
Should from yond cloud speak divine things,
And say "'Tis true," I'ld not believe them more
Than thee, all noble Marcius. Let me twine
Mine arms about thy body, where against
My *grained*[5] *ash*[6] an hundred times hath broke,
And scarr'd the moon with *splinters*[7]: here I *clip*[8]
The anvil of my sword, and do contest
As hotly and as nobly with thy love
As ever in ambitious strength I did
Contend against thy *valour*.[9] Know thou first,
I loved the maid I married; never man
Sigh'd truer breath; but that I see thee here,
Thou noble thing! more dances my *rapt*[10] heart
Than when I first my wedded mistress saw
Bestride[11] my threshold. Why, thou *Mars*[12]! I tell thee,

1. venomous; spiteful.
2. anger.
3. pulled out.
4. chief god.
5. hard-grained.
6. handle of a lance.
7. broken pieces.
8. embrace.
9. bravery.
10. enraptured.
11. step over.
12. god of wars.

country. Make use of this opportunity in such a way that the revengeful action which I propose against my country should prove beneficial to you, because I am determined to fight against my venomous country with the anger of the fiends of hell. But if it happens that you dare not follow this course and that you are too tired to take any more risks with fortune, then I may briefly tell you that I also have no desire to live any longer a life of weariness and therefore offer my throat to you and to your old, rooted hatred for me. If you do not cut my throat, you will only prove yourself a fool because I have always followed you with hatred and have shed plenty of the blood of your countrymen and because I should not be allowed to live except with the result of shame to you, unless my being allowed to live any more can be of some use to you.

Aufidius. O, Marcius, Marcius. Each word which you have spoken has uprooted from my heart a certain amount of my long-standing hatred for you. If Jupiter should from that cloud convey to me a heavenly message and affirm it to be true, I would not believe it as much as I believe your words, all noble Marcius, Let me put my arms around your body against which the hard-grained staff of my lance has vainly struck a hundred times and been shattered into pieces which flew up and hit the moon. Here I embrace the body which has been to my sword what the anvil is to the iron that is hammered and shaped on it ; and I do strive with as much warmth and as much nobility to win your love as ever I showed in my ambition and in the knowledge of my strength against your bravery in war. Let me first tell you that I loved the girl whom I married ; never has any man poured forth more sincerely the sighs of love than I did ; when I see you here, you noble being, my heart feels more thrilled and more enraptured than when I first saw my wedded wife step over my threshold to enter my home. Why, let me tell you in the name of Mars (the god of war) that we already have a force assembled and ready to

We have a *power*[1] on foot ; and I had purpose
Once more to hew thy *target*[2] from thy *brawn*,[3]
Or lose mine arm for't : thou hast beat me *out*[4]
Twelve several times, and I have nightly since
Dreamt of encounters 'twixt thyself and me ;
We have been down together in my sleep,
Unbuckling[5] *helms*[6], fisting each other's throat,
And waked half dead with nothing. Worthy Marcius,
Had we no quarrel else to Rome, but that
Thou are thence banish'd, we would muster all
From twelve to seventy, and pouring war
Into the bowels of ungrateful Rome,
Like a bold flood *o'er-beat*[7]. O, come, go in,
And take our friendly senators by the hands ;
Who now are here, taking their leaves of me,
Who am prepared against your territories,
Though not for Rome itself.

Cor. You bless me, gods !

Auf. Therefore, most *absolute*[8] sir, if thou wilt have
The leading of thine own revenges, take
The one half of my commission ; and set down—
As best thou art experienced, since thou know'st
Thy country's strength and weakness,—thine own ways ;
Whether to knock against the gates of Rome,
Or *rudely visit them*[9] in parts remote,
To fright them, ere destroy. But come in :
Let me commend thee first to those that shall
Say *yea*[10] to thy desires. A thousand welcomes !
And more a friend than e'er an enemy ;
Yet, Marcius, *that*[11] was much. Your hand : most welcome !

1. army.
2. shield.
3. muscular arm.
4. thoroughly.
5. tearing off.
6. helmets.
7. overwhelm.
8. perfect ; complete.
9. invade them.
10. yes.
11. my enmity.

march, and I had already resolved once more either to knock off your shield from your powerful and muscular arm, or lose my own arm in the attempt. You have defeated me thoroughly on twelve different occasions and ever since then I have been dreaming every night of encounters between yourself and me. In my dreams I have seen you and myself going down together, each trying to tear off the other's helmet; each hitting the other with his fists on the throat and I have woke up half dead with the fatigue of this imaginary fight. Noble Marcius, even if we had no other reason to fight against Rome except that Rome has banished you, we would yet assemble all our men from the age of twelve to the age of seventy and carry war into the very interior of ungrateful Rome, sweeping everything before us like a powerful flood. O, come, enter the hall and shake by the hands our friendly senators who are about to leave. I am prepared to invade Roman territories though my expedition was directed against the city of Rome.

Coriolanus. O, gods, you are very kind to me!

Aufidius. Therefore, incomparable sir, (perfect and complete sir) if you desire yourself to show the way in the execution of your own revenge, take joint command with me of the army which I am commissioned to lead, and settle the manner of your attack because you are better experienced than anybody else and because you are aware of both the strong points and weak points of your country: you may decide for yourself whether it is better to thunder at the gates of Rome itself or to invade outlying portions of the Roman territories in order to terrorise them before destroying them. But come in; let me first present you with all praise to the senators who shall signify their consent to your wishes. I offer you a thousand welcomes! And I now look upon you as a friend whom I love more than ever I hated you as an enemy; and yet, Marcius it was no slight enmity I bore you. Give me your hand; you are most welcome!

[*Exeunt* CORIOLANUS *and* AUFIDIUS. *The two* Servingmen *come forward*.

First Serv. Here's strange alteration!

Sec. Serv. By my hand, I had thought to have strucken him with a cudgel, and yet my mind gave me his clothes made a false report of him.

First Serv. What an arm he has! he turned me about with his finger and his thumb, as one would set up a top.

Sec. Serv. Nay, I knew by his face that there was something in him: he had, sir, a kind of face, *methought*[1]—I cannot tell how to term it.

1. I thought.

First Serv. He had so; looking as it were—would I were hanged, but I thought there was more in him than I could think.

Sec. Serv. So did I, I'll be sworn: he is *simply*[2] *the rarest*[3] man i' the world.

2. in a word; briefly.
3. the most wonderful.

First Serv. I think he is: but a greater soldier than he, you wot one.

Sec. Serv. Who, my master?

First Serv. Nay, it's no matter for that.

Sec. Serv. Worth six on him.

First Serv. Nay, not so neither: but I take him to be the greater soldier.

Sec. Serv. *Faith*[4] look you, one cannot tell how to say that: for the defence of a town, our general is excellent.

4. in truth.

First Serv. Ay, and for an assault too.

[*Re-enter third* Servingman.]

(Coriolanus *and* Aufidius *leave. The two Servants come forward.*)

First Servant. This is a strange turn in the situation !

Second Servant. I swear by my hand, I had decided to knock this fellow down with a heavy stick, and yet I had the suspicion that his mean clothes did not give a true impression of what he really was.

First Servant. What a strong arm he possesses. He pushed me about and whirled me around with his finger and his thumb, as one sets a top a-spinning.

Second Servant. No, I knew by his face that he had a distinguished look. He had, sir, a kind of face, I thought,—I cannot tell what to call it. [I do not know how to describe it.]

First Servant. Yes, he did have a kind of face which looked as it were—may I be hanged if I did not think that there was more in him than I could imagine.

Second Servant. I too had the same impression, I can swear ; in a word, he is the most wonderful man in the world.

First Servant. I think he is ; but you know somebody who is a greater soldier than this man.

Second Servant. Who is a greater soldier ? Do you mean my master ?

First Servant. It does not matter whom I mean. (I am not going to say whom I mean.)

Second Servant. My master is worth six men like him.

First Servant. No, that is not the case ; but I do agree that our master is the greater soldier.

Second Servant. In truth, look you, it is not easy to know what to say about that. So far as defending a town is concerned, our general is highly capable.

First Servant. Yes, and he is highly capable for launching an attack also.

(*Re-enter third Servant.*)

Third Serv. O slaves, I can tell you news,—news, you rascals !

First and Sec. Serv. What, what, what ? let's *partake*[1].

1. share.

Third Serv. I would not be a Roman, of all nations ; I had *as lieve*[2] be a condemned man.

2. rather.

First and Sec. Serv. Wherefore ? wherefore ?

Third Serv. Why, here's he that was wont to *thwack*[3] our general, Caius Marcius.

3. thrash.

First Serv. Why do you say "thwack our general"?

Third Serv. I do not say "thwack our general" ; but he was always good enough for him.

Sec. Serv. Come, we are fellows and friends : he was ever too hard for him ; I have heard him say so himself.

First Serv. He was too hard for him directly, to say the troth on't : before Corioli he *scotched*[4] him and *notched*[5] him like a *carbonado*[6].

4,5. made incisions ; inflicted wounds.
6. piece of meat.

Sec. Serv. An he had been *cannibally given*[7], he might have broiled and eaten him too.

7. in the habit of eating human flesh.

First Serv. But, more of thy news ?

Third Serv. Why he is so made on here within, as if he were son and heir to *Mars*[8] ; set at upper end o' the table ; no question asked him by any o the

8. the god of war.

Third Servant. O slaves, I have got news for you, news, you rascals!

First and Second Servants. What is the news? What is the news? Tell us. Let us share the news.

Third Servant. Of all nations in the world, I would like to belong to any but not to the Roman nation. I would rather be a man condemned to death than be a Roman.

First and Second Servants. Why, what is your reason for saying so?

Third Servant. Why, the man who used to thrash our general has arrived here.

First Servant. Why do you say that he used to "thrash" our general.

Third Servant. Well, I do not go so far as to say that he used to inflict a defeat on our general. But I must say that he was always a match for our general.

Second Servant. Come, as fellow-servants and good friends we may say among ourselves what we really think. Marcius was always more than a match for our master. I have heard our master himself say so.

First Servant. Marcius was more than a match for our master without any doubt, to speak the truth about this matter. When they fought before Corioli, Marcius inflicted wounds on our master and gave him severe cuts even as one cuts a piece of meat to be cooked.

Second Servant. If Marcius had been in the habit of eating human flesh, he might have cooked and eaten the flesh of our master also.

First Servant. But come, give us more of your news.

Third Servant. Well, the nobles at the dinner inside are showing such attention to Marcius as if he were the son and heir to the god of war himself. He has been given a seat at the head of the table. None of the senators has put any question to him

senators, but they stand bald before him: our general himself makes a mistress of him ; sanctifies himself with's hand and turns up the white o' the eye to his discourse. But the bottom of the news is, our general is cut i' the middle and but one half of what he was yesterday ; for the other has half, by the entreaty and grant of the whole table. He'll go, he says, and *sowl*[1] the porter of Rome gates by the ears: he will *mow*[2] all down before him, and leave his passage *polled*[3].

1. seize.
2. cut down.
3. swept clear.

Sec. Serv. And he's as like to do't as any man I can imagine.

Third Serv. Do't ! he will do't ; for, look you, sir, he has as many friends as enemies ; which friends, sir, as it were, durst not, look you, sir, show themselves, as we term it, his friends whilst he's *in directitude*[4].

4. discredited ; dejected.

First Serv. Directitude ! what's that ?

Third Serv. But when they shall see, sir, his crest up again, and the man in blood, they will out of their *burrows*[5], like *conies*[6] after rain. and revel all with him.

5. holes.
6. rabbits.

First Serv. But when goes this forward ?

Third Serv. To-morrow ; to-day ; presently ; you

or expressed any suspicion of him ; on the contrary they stand bare-headed in his presence. Our master himself treats him with the devotion he would show to his beloved ; our master considers the touch of Marcius's hand to be holy, and listens to everything Marcius says with rapt attention. But the conclusion and the most important part of the news is that our general has lost exactly one half of his authority and has been reduced to one half of what he was till yesterday ; the other half of the authority has been offered by all the nobles present at the table to Marcius, and Marcius has been entreated to accept the offer. (All the nobles present have offered to Marcius an equal share of authority with Aufidius and have entreated him to accept the offer.) Marcius says that he will go and seize the watchman at the gates of Rome by the ears even as one seizes a swine by the ear. He will cut down all who come to oppose him, and he will have his way to Rome swept clear before him.

Second Servant. And he is as likely to do it as any man I can think of.

Third Servant. Have you any doubt that he will do it ? He will certainly do it ; look you, sir, he has as many friends in Rome as enemies—his friends, sir, as it were, dare not, look you, sir, show themselves, as we may put it, his friends as long as he stands discredited.

First Servant. Discredited ? What do you mean ?

Third Servant. But when they shall see, sir, his crest up again and when they see him full of the spirit of fighting, they will come out of their shelters, like rabbits after rain, and take part with him in all the wild delight of slaughter.

First Servant. But when is it going to happen ?

Third Servant. Tomorrow ; today ; almost immediately ; you may be sure of hearing the battle

shall have the drum struck up this afternoon ; 'tis, as it were, a parcel of their feast, and to be executed ere they wipe their lips.

Sec. Serv. Why, then we shall have a stirring world again. This peace is nothing, but to rust iron, increase tailors, and breed ***ballad-makers***[1].

First Serv. Let me have war, say I ; it exceeds peace as far as day does night ; it's ***spritely***[2], waking, audible, and full of ***vent***[3]. Peace is a very ***apoplexy***[4], ***lethargy***[5] ; ***mulled***[6], deaf, sleepy, insensible.

Sec. Serv. 'Tis so : and it makes men hate one another.

Third Serv. Reason ; because they then less need one another. The wars for my money. I hope to see Romans as cheap as Volscians. They are rising, they are rising.

All. In, in, in, in ! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI

Rome. A public place.

[*Enter* SICINIUS *and* BRUTUS.]

Sic. We hear not of him, neither need we fear him;
His ***remedies***[7] are ***tame***[8] i' the present peace

1. song-writers.
2. full of spirit.
3. outlet (for energy.)
4. a kind of paralysis.
5. sluggishness.
6. flat and insipid.
7. attempts to undo the wrongs.
8. futile.

drums being beaten this afternoon. The execution of this business is, so to speak, merely a part of their feast and a thing to be finished off before they rise from the table.

Second Servant. Well ; when that happens we shall have excitement in the world again. The only result of this peace is that swords grow rusty ; that tailors become more plentiful (because men have more time to pay attention to their clothes) ; and that, for want of a better occupation, many people become ballad-writers.

First Servant. I am all in favour of war. War is as superior to peace as day is superior to night. War means courage and spirit ; it means wakefulness ; it means a quickened hearing ; war provides outlets for energy. Peace means complete and utter immobility ; it means laziness ; it has a flat, insipid taste ; it deadens the hearing ; it makes people inert and sluggish.

Second Servant. That is true. Besides all this, peace makes men hate one another.

Third Servant. And there is good reason for this, because during peace men need one another less. Give me wars for my money. (That is, I am all for war, in favour of war.) I hope to see Romans being killed indiscriminately as Volscians. The guests inside are getting up to go. They are getting up from the dinner table.

All. Let us rush indoors ; let us go and attend to our duties ; let us not be found gossiping here.

(*They leave*)

ACT IV SCENE VI

Rome. A public place.

(*Enter* Sicinius *and* Brutus.)

Sicinius. We have received no news of him ; nor is there any reason for us to feel afraid of him. In the present peaceful state of things, the efforts of his friends to remedy the wrong done to him (or, to

And quietness of the people, which before
Were in wild hurry. Here do we make his friends
Blush that the world goes well, who rather had,
Though they themselves did suffer by't, *behold*[1]
Dissentious[2] numbers *pestering*[3] streets than see
Our tradesmen singing in their shops and going
About their functions friendly.

Bru. We stood *to't*[4] in good time. [*Enter* MENENIUS.] Is this Menenius?

Sic. 'Tis he, 'tis he: O, he is grown most kind of late.

Both Tri. *Hail*[5], sir!

Men. Hail to you both!

Sic. Your Coriolanus
Is not much miss'd, but with his friends;
The commonwealth doth stand, and so would do,
Were he more angry at it.

Men. All's well; and might have been much better, if
He could have *temporized*[6].

Sic. Where is he, hear you?

Men. Nay, I hear nothing: his mother and his wife
Hear nothing from him.

[*Enter three or four* Citizens.]

Citizens. The gods preserve you both!

Sic. *God-den*[7], our neighbours.

Bru. God-den to you all, god-den to you all.

1. see.
2. mutinous
3. over-crowding.
4. to it.
5. greetings
6. adapted himself to the times.
7. good evening.

reinstate him in his former position), which were a short time ago made with great vigour, have almost been given up. Here we do make his friends feel ashamed to see that things are going on well without his help, though they would prefer to see, in spite of the harm they suffered because of it, gangs of mutinous fellows over-crowding the streets and interrupting all business instead of our tradesmen singing joyfully in their shops and going about their duties in a friendly way. It is lucky that we took up a stand at the proper time. (*Enter* Menenius) Is this Menenius ?

Sicinius. Yes, it is he. It is surely he. O, he has become most courteous of late. (O, he has been most friendly during some time past.)

Both Tribunes. Greetings to you, sir !

Menenius. Greetings to both of you.

Sicinius. That Coriolanus of whom you were so proud has not been much missed except by his friends. (Nobody here is feeling the absence of your Coriolanus except his own friends.) The commonwealth continues to function in a stable manner and will continue thus even if he were to feel annoyed by its stable functioning.

Menenius. Everything is going on well ; and might have been much better if he had adapted his behaviour to the times.

Sicinius. Where is he ? Have you heard anything as to where he is ?

Menenius. No, I have heard nothing ; nor have his mother and wife received any news from him.

(*Enter three or four* Citizens.)

Citizens. May the gods protect both of you !

Sicinius. Good-evening, our friends.

Brutus. Good-evening to you all ; good-evening to all of you.

First Cit. Ourselves, our wives, and children, on our knees,
Are bound to pray for you both.

Sic. Live, and *thrive*[1] !

Bru. Farewell, kind neighbours : we wish'd Coriolanus
Had loved you as we did.

Citizens. Now the gods keep you !

Both Tri. Farewell, farewell. [*Exeunt* Citizens.

Sic. This is a happier and more *comely*[2] time
Than when these fellows ran about the streets,
Crying *confusion*[3].

Bru. Caius Marcius was
A worthy officer i' the war ; but insolent,
O'ercome with pride, ambitious past all thinking,
Self-loving,—

Sic. And *affecting one sole throne*[4],
Without *assistance*[5].

Men. I think not so.

Sic. We should by this, to all our *lamentation*[6],
If he had gone forth consul, found it so.

Bru. The gods have well prevented it, and Rome
Sits safe and still without him.

[*Enter an Aedile*[7].]

Aed. Worthy tribunes,
There is a slave, whom we have put in prison,
Reports, the Volsces with two *several powers*[8]
Are enter'd in the Roman territories,
And with the deepest malice of the war
Destroy what lies before 'em.

1. prosper.
2. pleasant.
3. ruin ; destruction.
4. aiming at despotism.
5. assistants.
6. bitter grief.
7. assistant to the tribunes.
8. separat armies.

First Citizen. We feel that it is our imperative duty that we ourselves, our wives, and our children should, on our knees, pray to God for the welfare of both of you.

Sicinius. May you live long and may you be prosperous !

Brutus. Farewell, kind neighbours. We wish that Coriolanus had loved you the way we have loved you.

Citizens. Now may the gods protect you ! Both tribunes, farewell, farewell. (Citizens *leave.*)

Sicinius. This is a happier and more pleasant time than when these fellows used to run about the streets crying destruction.

Brutus. Caius Marcius was a competent officer in fighting a war ; but he was insolent, arrogant, ambitious beyond conception, self-loving—

Sicinius. And desiring despotic powers in his own hands to rule singly without assistance or associates.

Menenius. That is not my view.

Sicinius. If he had been allowed to become consul, we should by this time have discovered, to the bitter grief of us all, that what we have said was true.

Brutus. The gods have well prevented that from happening and the people of Rome find themselves safe and peaceful without him.

(*Enter an* Officer.)

Officer. Worthy tribunes, there is a slave whom we have put in prison and who reports that the Volscians with two separate armies have penetrated into the Roman territories and, with the fiercest cruelty that war can display, are destroying whatever they find before them.

Men. 'Tis Aufidius,
Who, hearing of our Marcius' banishment,
Thrusts forth his horns again into the world ;
Which were *inshell'd*[1] when Marcius stood for Rome,
And *durst*[2] not once peep out.

Sic. Come, what talk you
Of Marcius ?

Bru. Go see this rumourer *whipp'd*[3]. It cannot be
The Volsces dare break with us.

Men. Cannot be !
We have record that very well it can,
And three examples of the like hath been
Within my age. But *reason with*[4] the fellow.
Before you punish him, where he heard this,
Lest you shall chance to whip your *information*[5]
And beat the messenger who bids beware
Of what is to be *dreaded*[6].

Sic. Tell not me :
I know this cannot be.

Bru. Not possible.

[*Enter a* Messenger.]

Mess. The nobles in great *earnestness*[7] are going
All to the senate-house : some news is come
That *turns*[8] their *countenances*[9].

Sic. 'Tis this slave ;—
Go whip him 'fore the people's eyes :—his *raising*[10] ;
Nothing but his report.

Mess. Yes, worthy sir,
The slave's report is seconded ; and more,
More fearful, is deliver'd.

Sic. What more fearful ?

1. withdrawn into the shell.
2. dared.
3. flogged.
4. interrogate.
5. source of information.
6. feared.
7. anxiety.
8. changes.
9. faces.
10. invention.

Menenius. It is Aufidius who, having heard of the banishment of our Marcius, has thrust forth into the world his horns which were withdrawn into his shell (like the horns of a snail) when Marcius stood up in defence of Rome, and when Aufidius dared not peep out of his shell even once.

Sicinius. Come, what is use of talking about Marcius ?

Brutus. Go, and see that this rumour-monger is properly punished. It is impossible that the Volscians should dare to fight with us.

Menenius. Impossible ! There are precedents to show that it is quite possible, and during my lifetime there are three examples of the Volscians having behaved like that. But interrogate this fellow and ask him, before you punish him, where he got this news from, lest you should happen to whip a man who brings you correct information and lest you should beat the messenger who gives you a warning of what is to be feared.

Sicinius. Do not talk such stuff to me. I am certain that such a thing is impossible.

Brutus. Yes ; impossible.

(*Enter a* Messenger.)

Messenger. The nobles are all going to the senate-house in a state of great anxiety. Some news has arrived which makes their faces look sour and gloomy.

Sicinius. It is this slave who is responsible for this. Go, whip him before the eyes of the people ; it is all his invention, nothing but the rumour which he has spread.

Messenger. Yes, worthy sir, the rumour of the slave has been confirmed by others ; and more reports, and of a more terrible character, have been brought.

Sicinius. What more terrible reports have been brought ?

Mess. It is spoke freely out of many mouths—
How probable I do not know—that Marcius,
Join'd with Aufidius, leads a power 'gainst Rome,
And *vows*[1] revenge as *spacious*[2] as between
The young'st and oldest thing.

Sic. This is most *likely*[3] !

Bru. *Raised*[4] only, that the weaker sort may wish
Good Marcius home again.

1. swears.
2. huge.
3. proable.
4. invented

Sic. The very trick on't.

Men. This is unlikely :
He and Aufidius can no more *atone*[5]
Than *violentest*[6] *contrariety*[7].

5. be made one.
6. bitterest
7. opponents.

[*Enter a second* Messenger.]

Sec. Mess. You are sent for to the senate :
A fearful army, led by Cauis Marcius
Associated with Aufidius, rages
Upon our territories ; and have already
O'erborne their way, consumed with fire, and took
What lay before them.

[*Enter* Cominius.]

Com. O, you have made good work !

Men. What news ? what news ?—

Com. You have holp
To melt the city *leads*[8] upon your *pates*[9],
To see your wives dishonour'd *to your noses*[10],—

8. the lead covering roofs.
9. heads.
10. in your presence.

Men. What's the news ? what's the news ?

Com. Your temples burned in their cement, and
Your *franchises*[11], whereon you stood, confined
Into an *auger's*[12] *bore*[13].

11. votes.
12. awl's
13. hole.

Messenger. Many people are freely saying, though how far it is true I do not know, that Marcius, having joined Aufidius leads an army against Rome and swears a revenge as huge as is the difference between the youngest and the oldest thing.

Sicinius. How improbable ! (Most unlikely !)

Brutus. This report has been raised only so that the weaker kind of people may wish their good Marcius to come back home.

Sicinius. That is exactly the trick which has led to this report.

Menenius. This report is probably untrue. Marcius and Aufidius can no more be reconciled to each other than the most violent opposites.

(*Enter a second* Messenger.)

Second Messenger. You have been summoned to the senate. A terrible army, led by Caius Marcius who is in joint command of it with Aufidius, has invaded our territory ; has already swept away all obstacles in its path and, burning with the fire of revenge, has taken all that it found before it.

(*Enter* Cominius.)

Cominius. (*speaking to the tribunes.*) O, what a pretty state of affairs you have brought about !

Menenius. What is the news ? What is the news ?—

Cominius. (*To the tribunes*) You have helped to melt the lead covering the roofs of your city and pour it upon your heads, and you have helped to see your wives dishonoured before your very faces,—

Menenius. What is the news ? What is the news ?

Cominius. (*To the tribunes*) You have helped to burn your temples which stood strongly, held together by cement, and you have helped to see your democratic rights, on which you used to insist so strongly, narrowed down to the tiny size of a hole made by an awl (or, narrowed down to nothing.)

Men. Pray now, your news ?
You have made fair work, I fear me.—Pray, your news ?
If Marcius should be join'd with Volscians,—

Com. If !
He is their god : he leads them like a thing
Made by some other *deity*[1] than nature,
That shapes man better ; and they follow him,
Against us *brats*[2], with no less confidence
Than boys pursuing summer butterflies,
Or butchers killing flies.

1. god.
2. children.

Men. You have made good work,
You and your *apron-men*[3] ; you that stood so much
Upon the voice of occupation and
The breath ot garlic-eaters !

3. mechanics.

Com. He will shake
Your Rome about your ears.
Men. As *Hercules*[4]
Did shake down mellow fruit. You have made fair work !

4. an ancient hero.

Bru. But is this true, sir ?
Com. Ay : and you'll look pale
Before you find it *other*[5]. All the regions
Do smilingly revolt ; and who resist
Are mock'd for valiant ignorance,

5. otherwise.

Menenius. Pray now, what is the news you have received ? (To the tribunes) I am afraid that you have brought about a pretty state of affairs !—(*To* Cominius) Pray, what is the news you have received ?—(*To the tribunes*) If it should turn out to be true that Marcius has gone and joined the Volscians,—

Cominius. What do you mean by the word 'if'? He has already joined them and is worshipped by them as a god. He leads them like a being created not by Nature but by some higher supernatural power who can cast human beings in a superior mould ; they follow him to oppose us who, as compared with them, are but children ; and they follow him with as much confidence as boys have while chasing summer butter-flies, or as butchers have while killing flies.

Menenius. (*To the tribunes*) You have brought about a pretty state of affairs, you and your wretched mechanics ! You who attached so much importance to the opinions and demands of mere workmen and the multitude accustomed to eating such stinking foods as garlic !

Cominius. He will give such a shaking to your Rome that the city will crumble around you.

Menenius. He will give to Rome as destructive a shaking as Hercules gave to the ripe fruit of the apple-tree guarded by a dragon when he performed the eleventh labour which had been imposed upon him. Indeed, you have brought about a pretty state of affairs !

Brutus. But is this report true, sir ?

Cominius. Yes, your faces will turn pale with fear before you find it to be otherwise All the territories of Rome are gladly revolting against us ; and those which resist the advance of Marcius are merely jeered at for their stupid show of bravery, and are rewarded for their foolish loyalty to their

And perish constant fools. Who is't can blame him ?
Your enemies and his find something in him.

Men. We are all *undone*[1], unless
The noble man have mercy.

Com. Who shall ask it ?
The tribunes cannot do't for shame ; the people
Deserve such pity of him as the wolf
Does of the shepherds : for his best friends, if they
Should say "Be good to Rome", they charged him even
As those should do that had deserved his hate,
And therein show'd like enemies.

Men. 'Tis true :
If he were putting to my house the *brand*[2]
That should consume it, I have not the face
To say "*Beseech you*[3], cease". You have made fair hands,
You and your *crafts*[4] ! you have crafted fair !

Com. You have brought
A trembling upon Rome, such as was never
So incapable of help.

Both Tri. Say not we brought it.

Men. How ! Was it we ? we loved him ; but, like beasts
And cowardly nobles, gave way unto your *clusters*[5],
Who did hoot him out o' the city.

Com. But I fear
They'll roar him in again. Tullus Aufidius,
The second name of men, obeys his *points*[6]
As if he were his officer : *desperation*[7]
Is all the policy, strength and defence,

1. ruined.
2. lighted torch.
3. appeal to you.
4. craftsmen ; mechanics.
5. multitude.
6. instructions.
7. despair.

country by being slaughtered. Who is there that can blame Marcius for his behaving in this manner? Your enemies, who naturally would be his enemies, find something to value and respect in him.

Menenius. We will be completely ruined, unless the noble Marcius have pity on us.

Cominius. Who shall ask him for pity? The tribunes cannot do so on account of the shame that they will feel; the people deserve no more pity from him than the shepherds deserve from the wolf for their sheep; so far as his best friends are concerned, if they should appeal to him to show mercy to Rome, they would be doing so with no better grace than that of those who have deserved his hatred, and would thus be showing themselves as no better than his enemies.

Menenius. It is true. If he were to try to set my house on fire with a lighted torch to burn it down, I have not the face to appeal to him not to do so. You have indeed created a nice situation, you and your mechanics! You have shown a fine workmanship!

Cominius. You have brought down upon Rome a calamity more incapable of being prevented than any previous calamity.

Both Tribunes. Do not say that we are responsible for it.

Menenius. Why not? Are we responsible for it, then? We loved him; but, like heartless beings and cowardly nobles, we yielded to the demands of your multitudes who rose in mutiny against us, and who drove him out of the city with insulting shouts.

Cominius. But I am afraid they will now shout to welcome him when he enters Rome as a conqueror. Tullus Aufidius, second only to Marcius in war-like qualities, follows the instructions of Marcius as if Marcius were his officer. The policy, force, and

That Rome can make against them.

[*Enter a troop of* Citizens.]

Men. Here come the clusters.
And is Aufidius with him? You are they
That made the air *unwholesome*[1], when you cast
Your *stinking*[2] greasy caps in hooting at
Coriolanus' exile. Now he's coming;
And not a hair upon a soldier's head
Which will not prove a whip: as many *coxcombs*[3]
As you threw caps up will he tumble down,
And pay you for your voices. 'Tis no matter;
If he could burn us all into one coal,
We have deserved it.

Citizens. Faith, we hear fearful news.

First Cit. For mine own part,
When I said, banish him, I said, 'twas pity.

Sec. Cit. And so did I.

Third Cit. And so did I; and, to say the truth, so did very many of us: that we did, we did for the best; and though we willingly consented to his banishment, yet it was against our will.

Com. Ye're goodly things, you voices!

Men. You have made
Good work, you and your *cry*[4]! *Shall's*[5] to the Capitol?

Com. O, *ay*[6], what else?

[*Exeunt* COMINIUS *and* MENENIUS.

1. unhealthy.
2. foul-smelling.
3. heads.
4. pack of hounds.
5. shall us; shall we.
6. yes.

defensive power that Rome can now mobilise against the invaders consist only in a mood of despair.

(*Enter a group of* Citizens)

Menenius. Here comes the mob. (*To Cominius*) Is Aufidius accompanying Marcius? (*To Citizens*) You are the people who poisoned the air when you threw up your foul-smelling greasy caps in the air while expressing your delight by hooting at Coriolanus when he was banished. Now he is coming back as a conqueror; and every hair upon the head of every soldier will prove like a whip for you. He will cut off the heads of as many of you as threw up their caps in the air in joy at the time of his banishment, and he will thus punish you for your hooting at that time. But it does not matter; if he could burn us all in one heap, we should have no right to complain because we well deserve such a punishment.

Citizens. Truly, we hear frightening news.

First Citizen. So far as I am concerned, when I voted for his banishment, I also said that it was a pity that he was being banished.

Second Citizen. And I said the same thing.

Third Citizen. And I said the same thing too; and to speak the truth, a very large number among us said so. What we did, we did for the best; and though, at the instigation of the tribunes, we readily gave our consent to his banishment, yet we were persuaded to do so against our real inclinations.

Cominius. What fine fellows you are! You fellows are merely voices and nothing else!

Menenius. You have brought about a pretty state of affairs, you and your fellows who are nothing but voices! (*To Cominius*) Shall we go to the Capitol?

Cominius. O, yes; what else can we do? (Cominius *and* Menenius *leave*.)

Sic. Go, masters, get you home ; be not *dismay'd*[1] :
These are a *side*[2] that would be glad to have
This true which they so seem to fear. Go home,
And show no sign of fear.

1. depressed and disappointed.
2. party ; faction.

First Cit. The gods be good to us ! Come, masters, let's home. I ever said we were i' the wrong when we banished him.

Sec. Cit. So did we all. But, come, let's home. [*Exeunt* Citizens.

Bru. I do not like this news.

Sic. Nor I.

Bru. Let's to the Capitol. *Would*[3] half my wealth
Would buy this for a lie !

3. I wish.

Sic. Pray, let us go. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII

A camp, at a small distance from Rome.
[*Enter* AUFIDIUS *and his* Lieutenant.]

Auf. Do they still fly to the Roman ?

Lieu. I do not know what witchcraft's in him, but
Your soldiers use him as the *grace 'fore meat*[4],
Their talk at table, and their thanks at end ;
And you are *darken'd*[5] in this *action*[6], sir,
Even by your own.

Auf. I cannot help it now,
Unless, by using *means*[7], I lame the foot
Of our design. He bears himself more proudlier,
Even to my person, than I thought he would
When first I did embrace him : yet his nature
In that's no *changeling*[8] ; and I must excuse
What cannot be amended.

4. offering thanks to God before starting meals.
5. eclipsed.
6. campaign.
7. devices.
8. inconsistent.

Sicinius. Masters, go to your homes. Do not feel depressed or disappointed. The persons who have just spoken to you belong to a party which would be glad to see the very state of affairs of which they are outwardly afraid. Go home and do not show any sign of fear.

First Citizen. May the gods be kind to us! Come, masters, let us go home, I always said that we made a mistake when we banished him.

Second Citizen. All of us said that. But, come, let us go home. (Citizens *depart.*)

Brutus. I do not like this news.

Sicinius. Nor do I like it.

Brutus. Let us go to the Capitol. I would gladly give half my wealth to be told that this news was false.

Sicinius. Pray, let us go. (*They depart.*)

ACT IV SCENE VII

(A camp at a small distance from Rome)

(*Enter* Aufidius *and his* Lieutenant.)

Aufidius. Do the soldiers still follow the Roman general?

Lieutenant. I do not know what magic is in him; but he is the beginning, the middle, and the end, of their talk at meals. Instead of saying grace before and after meat, they just talk, about him; and your reputation is eclipsed in this campaign, sir, by the conduct of your own soldiers.

Aufidius. I cannot prevent it now, unless I use certain devices by which I will at the same time cripple our efforts to achieve the object of our campaign. He puts on airs of pride and self-importance, not only as he goes about but even in my presence, more than I thought he would put on when I first did embrace him. Yet his nature shows itself in no way inconsistent; and I must ignore that which cannot be remedied.

Lieu. Yet I wish, sir,—
I mean for your *particular*[1],—you had not
Join'd in commission with him; but either
Had borne the action of yourself, or else
To him had left it solely.

Auf. I understand thee well; and be thou sure,
When he shall come to his account, he knows not
What I can urge against him. Although it seems,
And so he thinks, and is no less apparent
To the vulgar eye, that he bears all things fairly,
And shows good *husbandry for*[2] the Volscian state,
Fights dragon-like, and does achieve as soon
As draw his sword; yet he hath left undone
That which shall break his neck or *hazard*[3] mine,
Whene'er we come to our account.

Lieu. Sir, I *beseech you*[4], think you he'll carry Rome?

Auf. All places yield to him ere he sits down;
And the nobility of Rome are his:
The senators and patricians love him too:
The tribunes are no soldiers; and their people
Will be as rash in the repeal, as hasty
To expel him thence. I think he'll be to Rome
As is the *osprey*[5] to the fish, who takes it
By sovereignty of nature. First he was
A noble servant to them; but he could not
Carry his honours *even*[6]: whether 'twas pride,
Which out of daily fortune ever *taints*[7]
The happy man; whether defect of judgment,

1. reputation.
2. interest in the welfare of.
3. risk.
4. appeal to you.
5 a kind of bird.
6. with moderation.
7. infects; afflicts.

Lieutenant. Yet I wish, sir,—I mean for your own reputation,—that you had not agreed to take joint command with him of the forces but had either singly taken over the command yourself or had entrusted it singly to him.

Aufidius. I well understand what you mean; and you may rest assured that he has no idea what charges I can bring against him when the time comes for him to render an account of his conduct. Although it seems, and he himself so thinks, and even the common people have the same impression, that he acts in everything with an honourable motive, that he shows due regard for the interest of the Volscian state, that he fights in a fiery manner like a dragon, and that he does succeed in his purpose as soon as he draws his sword; yet he has failed to do that which shall break his neck or endanger mine, whenever we come to the reckoning which will have to be made between us.

Lieutenant. Sir, I pray you, do you think that he will capture Rome?

Aufidius. All places surrender to him even before he lays a siege to them, and the nobles of Rome are on his side. The senators and the aristocrats love him also. The tribunes are not soldiers and cannot fight; and the common people will prove to be as hasty in asking him to return home as they were in banishing him from there. I think that Rome will be attracted towards him as irresistibly as the fish is attracted towards the osprey which captures the fish by that irresistible attraction which is given to it by Nature. First he was a high-placed public servant; but he could not wear his honours with moderation. Whether it was pride which, arising from constant good fortune, always afflicts the happy man; whether it was a defect of judgment in failing to turn to good account those advantages which he enjoyed and possessed; or whether it was

To fail in the disposing of those *chances*[1]
Which he was lord of ; or whether nature,
Not to be other than one thing, not moving
From the *casque*[2] to the *cushion*[3], but commanding peace
Even with the same *austerity*[4] *and garb*[5]
As he controll'd the war ; but one of these—
As he hath *spices*[6] of them all, not all,
For I dare so far free him—made him fear'd,
So hated, and so banish'd : but he has a merit,
To choke it in the utterance. So our virtues
Lie in the interpretation of the time :
And power, unto itself most *commendable*[7],
Hath not a tomb so evident as a chair
To *extol*[8] what it hath done.
One fire drives out one fire ; one nail, one nail ;
Rights by rights falter, strengths by strengths do fail.
Come, let's away. When, Caius, Rome is thine,
Thou art poor'st of all ; then shortly art thou mine.

[*Exeunt.*

1. advantages.
2. helmet, symbolical of war.
3. civil administration.
4,5. austere garb ; stern manner.
6. touches ; a little.
7. praiseworthy.
8. praise highly.

his stubborn nature which was incapable of changing itself and which, so accustomed to war, could not adapt itself to peaceful matters, showing itself even during peace time in that stern manner of doing things which he had learnt from the discipline of war ; but one of these—because he has a touch of these faults, though I may admit that he has only a touch of each and not any one of them fully developed—made him fearful in the eyes of the people. As a result of his being fearful, he soon began to be hated and, as a consequence of that, was soon driven into exile ; but he has a greatness which makes that sentence of banishment seem as nothing. (Or, he has a merit for no other purpose than to destroy it by boasting of it.) So our virtues depend on the way in which they are judged by those among whom we live. (Or, our virtues depend, for their effectiveness, upon the manner in which we interpret the surrounding circumstances and adapt ourselves to those circumstances.) And the powerful people, worthy of the highest praise in their own opinion, may not be praised after death by others as much as during their life-time by themselves. (Or, A man in high position, however much he may consider himself deserving of praise, finds no surer burial-place for his reputation than the chair from which he proclaims his own praise. That is, a man who proclaims his own praises loses whatever reputation he has earned.) One fire expels another fire ; one nail by its push drives out another nail ; rights give way to other and better rights ; strength yields to greater strength. Come, let us go away from here. Caius Marcius, when you have conquered Rome, you will have found yourself in the weakest possible position ; because then you will be at my mercy.

(*They depart.*)

ACT V SCENE I

Rome. A public place.

[*Enter* MENENIUS. COMINIUS, SICINIUS. BRUTUS, *and others.*]

Men. No, I'll not go : you hear what he hath said
Which was sometime his general ; who loved him
In a most dear particular. He call'd me father :
But what o' that ? Go, you that banish'd him.
A mile before his tent fall down, and knee
The way into his mercy : nay, if he *coy'd*[1]
To hear Cominius speak, I'll keep at home.

Com. He would not seem to know me.

Men. Do you hear ?

Com. Yet one time he did call me by my name :
I *urged*[2] our old acquaintance, and the drops
That we have bled together. Coriolanus
He would not answer to : forbad all names ;
He was a kind of nothing, titleless,
Till he had *forged himself*[3] a name o' the fire
Of burning Rome.

Men. Why, so : you have made good work !
A pair of tribunes that have *rack'd*[4] for fair Rome,
To make coals cheap,—a noble memory !

1. disdained; showed contempt.

2. pressed ; dwelt upon.

3. shaped for himself.

4. made great efforts for.

ACT V SCENE I

Rome. A public place.

(*Enter* Menenius, Cominius, Sicinius, *and others.*)

Menenius. No, I will not go. You have heard how Marcius spoke to Cominius who but a short time ago was his general and who loved him with a special affection. No doubt, Marcius used to call me father but that signifies nothing. It is for you to go to him, you who banished him. Go and, when you are still at a distance of a mile from his tent, fall down on your knees, and make your way to him in that humble posture in order to excite his sympathy. No, if he has aleeady scornfully refused to listen to Cominius, I will not go to him, but stay at home.

Cominius. He (Marcius) refused even to give any sign of recognising me.

Menenius. Do you hear how Marcius treated Cominius ?

Cominius. Yet only once he did address me by my name. I dwelt on our long years of intimacy and I reminded him of the drops of blood we had shed together when fighting side by side in the wars. When I addressed him as 'Coriolanus', he did not acknowledge that title as belonging to him. He refused to be addressed by any name. He appeared to be nameless and titleless, a man without any identity, till he had shaped for himself a name which would bear testimony to his destruction of Rome by fire.

Menenius. You see how the land lies. You have brought about a pretty state of affairs, you two tribunes ; you have made great efforts for beautiful Rome in order to reduce the price of coal. It will remain a noble memorial to your good work !

Com. I minded him how royal 'twas to pardon
When it was less expected : he replied,
It was a *bare*[1] petition of a state
To one whom they had punish'd.

Men. Very well :
Could he say less ?

Com. I offer'd to awaken his regard
For's private friends : his answer to me was,
He could not stay to pick them in a pile
Of *noisome*[2] *musty*[3] *chaff*[4], he said 'twas folly,
For one poor grain or two, to leave unburnt,
And still to nose the offence.

Men. For one poor grain or two !
I am one of those ; his mother, wife, his child,
And this brave fellow too, we are the grains :
You are the musty chaff ; and you are smelt
Above the moon : we must be burnt for you.

Sic. Nay, pray, be patient : if you refuse your aid
In this so never-needed help, yet do not
Upbraid's with our distress. But, sure, if you
Would be your country's pleader, your good tongue,
More than the *instant*[5] army we can make,
Might stop our countryman.

Men. No, I'll not *meddle*[6].

Sic. Pray you, go to him.

1. bare of explanations and apologies

2 troublesome.
3. foul ; damp.
4. husk.

5. sudden.

6. intervene.

Cominius. I reminded him how supremely noble it would be on his part to forgive those who had done him wrong, especially when that forgiveness was little expected. His reply was that the petition for forgiveness was bare-faced and did not admit of any explanations and apologies which Romans might offer to the man whom they had banished.

Menenius. Very well, was he expected to say anything less harsh ?

Cominius. I tried to stir his regard for his personal friends. His reply to me was that he could not pause to pick out his personal friends from amongst a heap of such troublesome, miserable, and worthless beings as the people in general. He said that it would be a waste of mercy, for the sake of one or two persons whose record after all was not worth much, to spare the rest and endure their hateful existence.

Menenius. So he referred to his friends and relations as poor grains for whom he does not have much regard ! I am one of those poor grains ; his mother, his wife, his child, and this brave general (Cominius), also belong to the category of poor grains. You are the worthless heap of chaff ; and your foul smell goes up beyond the moon. We must be burnt along with you (or, we must also perish because he has to destroy you.)

Sicinius. No, I appeal to you to be patient. If you refuse to help in this difficult situation in which help is needed as it was never needed before, yet you should not scold us for our distress. But surely if you undertake to be an advocate for your country, your good words might more effectively stop our countryman (Marcius) than any army we can raise at such a short notice.

Menenius. No, I will have nothing to do with this business.

Sicinius. I appeal to you to go to him.

Men. What should I do ?

Bru. Only make trial what your love can do
For Rome, towards Marcius.

Men. Well, and say that Marcius
Return me, as Cominius is return'd,
Unheard ; what then ?
But as a discontented friend, *grief-shot*[1]
With his unkindness ? say't be so ?

Sic. Yet your good will
Must have that thanks from Rome, *after the measure*[2]
As you intended well.

Men. I'll undertake't :
I think he'll hear me. Yet, *to bite his lip*[3]
And *hum at*[4] good Cominius, much *unhearts*[5] me.
He was not taken well ; he had not dined :
The veins unfill'd, our blood is cold, and then
We pout upon the morning, are unapt
To give or to forgive ; but when we have stuff'd
These pipes and these conveyances of our blood
With wine and feeding, we have suppler souls
Than in our priest-like fasts : therefore I'll watch him
Till he be dieted to my request,
And then I'll set upon him.

Bru. You know the very road into his kindness,
And cannot lose your way.

Men. Good faith, I'll *prove him*[6],
Speed how it will[7]. I shall ere long have knowledge
Of my *success*[8]. [*Exit.*

Com. He'll never hear him.

1. grief-stricken.
2. in proportion to.
3. to show his contempt.
4. show displeasure with.
5. disheartens.
6. make trial of him.
7. whatever be the result.
8. attempt.

Menenius. What could I possibly do ?

Brutus. You will at least make a trial of what service your love for Rome can render to your country, by approaching Marcius with an entreaty.

Menenius. Well, and suppose that Marcius should send me back without hearing me, as he has sent back Cominius ! What would be the result then except that I should return as a friend whose prayers had been rejected, and who feels grief-stricken because of un-kindness ? Say whether you want this to happen.

Sicinius. Yet your goodwill must receive from Rome the thanks proportionate to your good intentions, even if you do not succeed.

Menenius. I will undertake this mission. I think he will listen to me favourably. Yet I feel much discouraged to think that he might show the same contempt and displeasure towards me as he showed towards good Cominius. The attempt to placate him was not made at a proper time; he had not taken his dinner yet; the veins being unfilled, our blood is cold, and then we look at everything in a fretful mood and are disinclined to give or to forgive, but when we have filled these pipes and these means of transport of our blood with wine and food, we have less stubborn hearts than when we have starved ourselves like priests by observing fasts. Therefore, I will wait and watch till he has been put into the proper mood to listen to my request and then I will work upon him.

Brutus. You know the true and direct path which will lead you to win kindness from him, and you will not fail to reach his heart.

Menenius. In good faith I will make a trial of him whatever the result may be. Before long I shall have knowledge of the result of my attempt.

(*He leaves*)

Cominius. Marcius will never listen even to Menenius.

Sic. Not ?
Com. I tell you, he does sit in gold, his eye
Red as 'twould burn Rome ; and his injury
The *gaoler*[8] to his pity. I kneel'd before him ;
'Twas very faintly he said "Rise" ; dismiss'd me
Thus, with his speechless hand : what he would do,
He sent in writing after me ; what he would not ;
Bound with an oath to yield to his conditions :
So that all hope is vain,
Unless his noble mother, and his wife ;
Who, as I hear, mean to *solicit him*[9]
For mercy to his country. Therefore, let's hence,
And with our fair entreaties haste them on.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II

Entrance of the Volscian camp before Rome. Two Sentinels *on guard.*

[*Enter to them* MENENIUS.]

First Sen. Stay : whence are you ?

Sec. Sen. Stand, and go back.
Men. You guard *like men*[1] ; 'tis well : but, by your leave,
I am an officer of state, and come
To speak with Coriolanus.
First Sen. From whence ?
Men. From Rome.
First. Sen. You may not pass, you must return : our general
Will no more hear from thence.

1. curb ; restraint.

2. appeal to him.

3. efficiently.

Sicinius. No?

Cominius. I tell you that Marcius sits enthroned in awful majesty, and his eyes seem to be burning with the fire with which he wishes to burn Rome; his sense of the wrong done to him restrains and curbs his mercy. When I knelt before him to seek his mercy for Rome, he could hardly bring himself to ask me to rise from my knees; he waved me away and thus dismissed me without speaking. After I had been dismissed, he sent in writing a statement of what he would do and what he would not do, he being bound by an oath to fulfil the conditions agreed upon between him and the Volscians. In the light of all this, all hope of his relenting is vain, unless he be approached by his noble mother and his wife who, as I hear, propose to plead for mercy from him to his country. Therefore, let us go from here, and with our humble appeals ask them to hurry up and go to see Marcius. (*They leave.*)

ACT V SCENE II

Entrance of the Volscian Camp before Rome.

Two Sentinels are on guard.

(*Enter to them* Menenius.)

First Sentinel. Halt; where have you come from?

Second Sentinel. Halt; and go back.

Menenius. You are very good at your duty of keeping watch; I appreciate your alertness; but, pardon me, I am an officer of state and have to speak to Coriolanus.

First Sentinel. Where have you come from?

Menenius. From Rome.

First Sentinel. We cannot allow you to pass. You must go back. Our general has decided to receive no further messages from there.

Sec. Sen. You'll see your Rome embraced with fire before
You'll speak with Coriolanus.

Men. Good my friends,
If you have heard your general talk of Rome,
And of his friends there, *it is lots to blanks*[1],
My name hath touch'd your ears : it is Menenius.

First Sen. Be it so ; go back : the virtue of your name
Is not here passable.

Men. I tell thee, fellow,
Thy general is *my lover*[2] : I have been
The *book*[3] of his good acts, whence men have read
His fame unparallel'd, *haply amplified*[4] ;
For I have ever magnified my friends,
Of whom he's chief, with all the size that verity
Would without *lapsing*[5] suffer : nay, sometimes,
Like to a bowl upon a *subtle*[6] ground,
I have tumbled past the throw ; and in his praise
Have almost *stamp'd the leasing*[7] : therefore, fellow,
I must have leave to pass.

First Sen. Faith, sir, if you had told as many lies in his behalf as you have uttered words in your own, you should not pass here ; no, though it were as virtuous to lie as to live chastely. Therefore, go back.

Men. *Prithee*[8], fellow, remember my name is Menenius, always factionary on the party of your general.

Sec. Sen. Howsoever you have been his liar, as

1. it is likely.
2. dear friend.
3. record.
4. possibly exaggerated.
5. lapsing into falsehood.
6. slippery.
7. given the stamp of truth to untruth.
8. pray you.

Second Sentinel. You will see your Rome set ablaze on fire before you get the opportunity to speak to Coriolanus.

Menenius. My good friends, if you have heard your general talking of Rome and of his friends in Rome, there is every possibility that you have heard my name ; my name is Menenius.

First Sentinel. It may be so ; yet we must ask you to go back. However effective your name may be, it cannot serve as a passport here.

Menenius. I tell you, fellow, your general is my dear friend. I have been like a record of his brave deeds, a record from which men have received information of his unequalled fame, though possibly in an exaggerated form ; because I have always exaggerated the qualities of my friends of whom he is the chief, so far as was possible without allowing myself to become guilty of falsehood. No, sometimes, I have shot beyond the mark like a bowl rolling over slippery and deceptive ground ; and in praising your general I have almost given to untruth the stamp of truth. (In praising your general, I have even given to a lie such a sanction as to render it believable and acceptable) ; therefore, fellow, you must no longer refuse to let me pass.

First Sentinel. Indeed, sir, we shall not permit you to pass even if you have told as many lies in praise of him as you have spoken words in support of your own wish to be allowed to pass. No, we cannot permit you to pass even though it had been as virtuous to tell lies as to live a clean moral life. Therefore, go back.

Menenius. I pray you, fellow, remember that my name is Menenius who in all matters took the side of your general.

Second Sentinel. Whatever lies you may have told on his behalf, as you say you have done, I am one who, serving under him and speaking the truth,

you say you have, I am one that, telling true under him, must say, you cannot pass. Therefore, go back.

Men. Has he dined, canst thou tell ? for I would not speak with him till after dinner.

First Sen. You are a Roman, are you ?

Men. I am, as thy general is

First Sen. Then you should hate Rome, as he does. Can you, when you have pushed out your gates the very defender of them, and, in a violent popular ignorance given your enemy your shield, think to front his revenges with the easy groans of old women, the virginal palms of your daughters, or with the *palsied*[1] *intercession*[2] of such a decayed *dotant*[3] as you seem to be ? Can you think to blow out the intended fire your city is ready to flame in, with such weak breath as this ? No, you are deceived ; therefore, back to Rome, and prepare for your execution : you are condemned, our general has sworn you out of *reprieve*[4] and pardon.

1. trembling
2. intervention ; advocacy.
3 dotard.
4. pardon.

Men. *Sirrah*[5], if thy captain knew I were here, he would use me with *estimation*[6].

First Senator. Come, my captain knows you not.

5. low fellow.
6. respect.

Men. I mean, thy general.

First Sen. My general cares not for you. Back, I say, go ; lest I let forth your half-pint of blood ; back, —that's the utmost of your having : back.

must say that you cannot pass. (I do not claim, like you, to be his friend and to have the privilege of telling lies in praise of him ; as a mere subordinate my duty is to repeat his orders as I receive them.) Therefore, go back.

Menenius. Can you tell me whether he has taken his dinner ? Because I would not speak to him till after he has taken his dinner.

First Sentinel. You are a Roman, are you ?

Menenius. I am a Roman, as your general is.

First Sentinel. Then you should hate Rome, as he does. You have pushed him out of your gates, a man who was the very defender of those gates ; and in a violent fit of popular stupidity, you have given away to your enemy a man who would have defended you like a shield. Can you now face his revenges with the easy groans of old women, with the hands of your own maidens held up in humble appeal, or with the tremulous intervention of a feeble old dotard such as you seem to be ? Do you think that, with such weak breath as I have described, you can blow out the fire which is very soon going to be set to your city and which will destroy your city ? No, you are mistaken ; therefore, go back to Rome, and get ready for your destruction ; you are condemned to death and our general has sworn not to pardon you nor to cancel the punishment which he had decided to inflict upon you.

Menenius. Fellow, if your captain knew I was here, he would treat me with respect.

First Sentinel. Come, my captain does not know you at all.

Menenius. I mean your general, Coriolanus.

First Sentinel. My general does not care for you. Go back, I tell you, lest I should shed the small quantity of blood that is left in your shrunken old body ; go back. That is the utmost you will get from me ; go back.

Men. Nay, but, fellow, fellow,—

[*Enter* CORIOLANUS *and* AUFIDIUS.]

Cor. What's the matter?

Men. Now, you *companion*[1], I'll say an errand for you: you shall know now that I am in *estimation*[2]; you shall perceive that a *Jack guardant*[3] cannot office me from my son Coriolanus: guess, but by my *entertainment*[4] with him, if thou standest not i'the state of hanging, or of some death more long in spectatorship, and crueller in suffering; behold now presently, and swoon for what's to come upon thee. [*To* COR.] The glorious gods sit in *hourly synod*[5] about thy particular prosperity, and love thee no worse than thy old father Menenius does! O my son, my son! thou art preparing fire for us; look thee, here's water to quench it. I was *hardly*[6] moved to come to thee; but being assured none but myself could move thee, I have been blown out of your gates with sighs; and *conjure*[7] thee to pardon Rome, and thy *petitionary*[8] countrymen. The good gods *assuage*[9] thy wrath, and turn the *dregs*[10] of it upon this *varlet*[11] here,—this, who, like a block, hath denied my access to thee.

Cor. Away!

Men. How! away!

Cor. Wife, mother, child, I know not. My affairs
Are *servanted*[12] to others: though I owe
My revenge properly, my *remission*[13] lies

1. wretched or low fellow.
2. respect.
3. impertinent fellow proud of keeping good guard.
4. reception; meeting.
5. constant conference.
6. with difficulty.
7. adjure; charge on oath.
8. suppliant.
9. quench; cool down.
10. what is left; the remains.
11. low fellow.
12. subordinated to.
13. leniency; mercy.

Menenius. No, but, fellow, fellow—(*Enter* Coriolanus *and* Aufidius.)

Coriolanus. What is the matter ?

Menenius. Now, you wretched fellow, I will tell Coriolanus of your behaviour. You shall know that I am held in much respect by him. You shall see that a saucy fellow, proud of his keeping good watch, cannot prevent me by his officious ways from meeting my son, Coriolanus ; you will know, simply from the way in which he receives me, that you are likely to be hanged or to be sentenced to a kind of death which is more cruel and painful than hanging and which will afford the spectators a longer enjoyment of your torture ; now be ready immediately to observe, and what you see will cause you to faint on realising the punishment which will soon be inflicted on you. (*To Coriolanus.*) May the glorious gods sit constantly in conference to decide in what way your happiness above all men may be increased, and may they love you no less than old Menenius who is like a father to you ! O, my son, my son, ; you are preparing to set fire to our city ; see, here is water, that is, my tears, to quench that fire. I was with great difficulty induced to come to you ; but being assured that nobody except myself could touch your heart, I have been blown out of the gates of Rome with the sighs of Romans, and I do appeal to you to pardon Rome and your suppliant countrymen. May the good gods diminish your anger, and turn what is left of it upon this low fellow, this fellow who, the blockhead as he is, has blocked my way and refused to let me approach you.

Coriolanus. Go away from here !

Menenius. What do you mean ? Go away !

Coriolanus. I no longer recognise my wife, mother, or child. My affairs have been subordinated to the will of others. Although, the revenge I seek is particularly my own, yet any mercy I may show depends upon the will of the Volscians. Though we

In Volscian breasts. That we have been familiar,
Ingrate forgetfulness shall poison, rather
Than pity note how much. Therefore, be gone.
Mine ears against your suits are stronger than
Your gates against my force. Yet, for I loved thee,
Take this along ; I *writ it*[1] for thy sake, [*Gives a letter.*
And would have sent it. Another word, Menenius,
I will not hear thee speak. This man, Aufidius,
Was my beloved in Rome : yet *thou behold'st*[2] !

Auf. You keep a constant temper.
[*Exeunt* CORIOLANUS *and* AUFIDIUS.

First Sen. Now, sir, is your name Menenius ?

Sec. Sen. 'Tis a *spell*[3], you see, of much power : you know the way home again.

First Sen. Do you hear how we are *shent*[4] for keeping your greatness back ?

Sec. Sen. What cause, do you think, I have to swoon ?

Men. I neither care for the world nor your general : for such things as you, I can scarce think there's any, ye're so *slight*[5]. He that hath a will to die by himself fears it not from another : let your general do his worst. For you, be that you are, long ; and your misery increase with your age ! I say to you,

1. wrote.
2. you see.
3. magic.
4. scolded ; rebuked.
5. little.

have been friends, it is better that this fact be allowed to perish through my ingratitude and forgetfulness than that it be remembered through my pity. Therefore, leave this place and go. My ears can better resist your appeal for mercy than your gates can resist the violence of my attack on your city. Yet, because I have loved you in the past, take this along with you. I wrote this letter for your sake and would have sent it to you. (*Gives a letter to Menenius.*) Menenius; I will not listen to a single word more spoken by you. Aufidius, this was my beloved friend in Rome; yet you see how heartless I am towards him!

Aufidius. You act with firmness in accordance with your promises. (Coriolanus *and* Aufidius *leave.*)

First Sentinel. Now, sir, what do you say? You were very proud of your name, Menenius. What have you achieved with the help of that name?

Second Sentinel. You see, your name has proved to possess a powerful magic. The result of your interviews with our general is that you are free to retrace your steps homewards.

First Sentinel. Do you remember the rebukes with which you threatened us for refusing admission to so high and powerful a person as yourself.

Second Sentinel. You said that I would collapse (or, faint) at what was about to happen to me. What reason, do you think, is there for me to faint?

Menenius. I do not care either for the world or for your general. As for such miserable creatures as you are, no one would be likely to trouble himself about you because you are beneath notice. He who has a desire to kill himself is not afraid of being killed by another. Let your general do his worst. So far as you are concerned, I cannot wish you any worse fate than that you should continue to be what you are; and may your miserable condition become more miserable with coming years! I have

as I was said to, Away ! [*Exit.*

First Sen. A noble fellow, *I warrant him*[1].

1. I can surely say this about him.

Sec. Sen. The worthy fellow is our general : he's the rock, the oak not to be wind-shaken. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III

The tent of CORIOLANUS.

[*Enter* CORIOLANUS, AUFIDIUS, *and others.*]

Cor. We will before the walls of Rome to-morrow
Set down our *host*[2]. My partner in this action,
You must report to the Volscian lords, how *plainly*[3]
I have borne this business.

2. army.
3. in a straight forward manner.

Auf. Only their ends
You have respected ; stopp'd your ears against
The general *suit*[4] of Rome ; never admitted
A private whisper, no, not with such friends
That thought them sure of you.

4. appeal.

Cor. This last old man,
Whom with a *crack'd*[5] heart I have sent to Rome,
Loved me above the measure of a father ;
Nay, *godded*[6] me, indeed. Their latest refuge
Was to send him ; for whose old love I have,
Though I show'd sourly to him, once more offer'd
The first conditions, which they did refuse
And cannot now accept ; to grace him only
That thought he could do more, a very little
I have yielded to : fresh embassies and suits,
Nor from the state nor private friends, hereafter

5. broken.
6. worshipped me as a god.

to say the same thing to you as was said to me, namely, to ask you to go away. (*He leaves*)

First Sentinel. He is a noble fellow, I assure you.

Second Sentinel. It is our general who deserves all the praise. He is like a rock, and like an oak tree which is not shaken by the wind. He is a man of iron determination. (*They leave*).

ACT V SCENE III

The tent of Coriolanus.

(*Enter* Coriolanus, Aufidius, *and others.*)

Coriolanus. We will encamp our army before the walls of Rome tomorrow. My partner in this campaign, you must report to the Volscian lords the straight-forward loyalty which I have shown towards them in conducting these negotiations with the Romans.

Aufidius. You have considered nothing but Volscian interests. You have refused to listen to the appeals and entreaties of the Roman people. You have not granted a private interview to anyone, not even to those friends who thought that they were sure to influence you.

Coriolanus. This old man, who came to me last of all and whom I have sent back to Rome broken-hearted, loved me more than a father loves his son. Not only that, he even worshipped me as a god. The last hope of the Romans in trying to obtain my mercy lay in sending this man to me. For the sake of this man's old love for me, I have, though I behaved so harshly towards him, once more offered the original conditions for peace, conditions which Romans had previously rejected and which they cannot now accept. In order that this man might find favour in their eyes, I have softened somewhat, though he had come with the idea that he could influence me to a much greater degree. From now

Will I lend ear to. Ha ! what shout is this ?
[Shout within.
Shall I be tempted to *infringe*[1] my vow
In the same time 'tis made ? I will not.

[*Enter, in mourning habits*[2], VIRGILIA, VOLUMNIA, *leading young* MARCIUS, VALERIA, *and* Attendants.]

My wife comes foremost ; then the honour'd mould
Wherein this *trunk*[3] was framed, and in her hand
The grandchild to her blood. But, out, affection !
All bond and privilege of nature, break !
Let it be virtuous to be obstinate.
What is that *curt'sy*[4] worth ? or those doves' eyes,
Which can make gods forsworn ? I melt, and am not
Of stronger earth than others. My mother bows ;
As if *Olympus*[5] to a molehill should
In *supplication*[6] nod : and my young boy
Hath an aspect of *intercession*[7], which
Great nature cries "Deny not". Let the Volsces
Plough Rome, and harrow Italy : I'll never
Be such a *gosling*[8] to obey instinct, but stand,
As if a man were author of himself
And knew no other *kin*[9].

Vir. My lord and husband !
Cor. These eyes are not the same I wore in Rome.

Vir. The sorrow that delivers us thus changed
Makes you think so.

1. break.
2. clothes.
3. body.
4. low.
5. mountain on which gods lived.
6. entreaty.
7. advocacy
8. young goose.
9. relative.

onward I will pay no heed to any further messages and appeals whether they come from the state or from my personal friends. Ha ! What noise is this ? (*Shout within*) Shall I be urged (or, tempted) to break my oath at the very moment of taking it ? No, I will not break it.

(*Enter, in mourning clothes*, Virgilia, Volumnia, *leading young* Marcius (*son of* Caius Marcius), Valeria *and* Attendants.)

My wife leads them all ; she is followed by that honourable personality in whose womb my bodily frame took shape ; and she is holding with her hand her grandson. But I must expel all natural affection from my heart. Let every natural tie and every claim of nature be disregarded (or, violated). In future let obstinacy be rewarded as a virtue. That bow from her has no power to soften my heart. Nor can those eyes which are as mild as the eyes of doves and the charm of which would make even the gods commit perjury. But I soften, and I find that I am not made of any different clay from other human beings. (Or, I have no harder a heart than other people.) My mother bows to me ; her bowing to me is like the sacred Olympus bowing humbly to a molehill in order to seek a favour ; and my young son has on his face an expression of entreaty which the powerful natural feelings in me urge me not to reject. Let the Volscians destroy Rome and ravage Italy. I will never behave like a young goose and yield to mere natural feelings but I will stand firm like a self-created man who knows no relationship of any kind.

Virgilia. My lord and husband !

Coriolanus. I no longer look upon you as I used to do when I lived in Rome before my banishment.

Virgilia. You think that you do not look upon us in that way because we appear before you greatly changed by sorrow.

Cor. Like a dull actor now,
I have forgot my part, and I am *out*[1],
Even to a full disgrace. Best of my flesh,
Forgive my tyranny ; but do not say
For that "Forgive our Romans." O, a kiss
Long as my exile, sweet as my revenge !
Now, by the jealous queen of heaven, that kiss
I carried from thee, dear ; and my true lip
Hath virgin'd it e'er since. You gods ! I *prate*[2],
And the most noble mother of the world
Leave unsaluted : sink, my knee, i' the earth ;
[*Kneels.*
Of thy deep duty more impression show
Than that of common sons.

1. at a loss for words.
2. chatter.

Vol. O, stand up blest !
Whilst, with no softer cushion than the *flint*[3],
I kneel before thee ; and *unproperly*[4]
Show duty, as mistaken all this while
Between the child and parent. [*Kneels.*

3. stone.
4. contrary to what is proper.

Cor. What is this ?
Your knees to me ? to your corrected son ?
Then let the pebbles on the *hungry*[5] beach
Fillip[7] the stars ; then let the mutinous winds
Strike the proud cedars 'gainst the fiery sun ;
Murdering impossibility, to make
What cannot be, slight work.

5. barren.
6. hit ; strike.

Vol. Thou art my warrior ;
I *holp*[7] to frame thee. Do you know this lady ?

7. helped.

Coriolanus. I have now forgotten the role I had to play just as a dull and incompetent actor forgets his role ; and I am so completely at a loss for words that I shall utterly disgrace myself. You who are part of my flesh and bones, and the better part, forgive me for my cruelty ; but because I ask your forgiveness it should not provide you a basis for seeking my forgiveness for the Romans. O, grant me a kiss as prolonged as the period of my banishment and as sweet as will be the gratification of my revenge. Now, I swear by Juno who is the guardian of marriages, such was the very kiss I last took from you, my dear ; and since then my loyal lips have known no kiss from other lips. You gods ! I am talking idly, and I have not yet saluted my mother who is the noblest mother in the world. Let my knees bend and sink to the earth. (*Kneels*)

O, my knees, I want you to show a greater awareness of your respectful duty towards my mother than common sons show towards their mothers.

Volumnia. O, rise, my blessed son ! It is I who shall kneel before you with no softer cushions than stones for my knees to rest upon ; and, contrary to all notions of what is proper, let me show respect to you, as if the submission of children to parents, which has been customary up to this time, was a reversal of the natural order of things. (*She kneels*)

Coriolanus. What is this ? You kneel to your son whom you used to rebuke in order to mend him. If my mother kneels to me, then let the pebbles lying on the barren seashore fly upwards and hit the stars ; then let the rebellious winds hurl up the proud cedar trees against the blazing sun, thus putting an end to impossibility, and making impossibility the easiest thing.

Volumnia. You are my warrior ; I helped to make you the warrior that you are. Do you recognise this lady who stands before you ?

Cor. The noble sister of Publicola,
The moon of Rome, *chaste*[1] as the *icicle*[2]
That's curdied by the frost from purest snow
And hangs on *Dian's*[3] temple : dear Valeria !

Vol. This is a poor *epitome*[4] of yours.
Which by the interpretation of full time
May show like all yourself.

Cor. The god of soldiers,
With the consent of supreme *Jove*[5], inform
Thy thoughts with nobleness ; that thou mayst prove
To shame *invulnerable*[6], and stick i' the wars
Like a great sea-mark, standing every *flaw*[7],
And saving those that *eye*[8] thee !

Vol. Your knee, sirrah.

Cor. That's my brave boy !

Vol. Even he, your wife, this lady, and myself,
Are suitors to you.

Cor. I *beseech*[9] you, peace :
Or, if you'ld ask, remember this before :
The thing I have *forsworn to grant*[10] may never
Be held by you denials. Do not bid me
Dismiss my soldiers, or *capitulate*[11]
Again with Rome's mechanics : tell me not
Wherein I seem unnatural : desire not
To *allay*[12] my rages and revenges with
Your colder reasons.

Vol. O, no more, no more !
You have said you will not grant us anything ;
For we have nothing else to ask, but that
Which you deny already : yet we will ask ;

1. pure.
2. frozen drop of water.
3. Diana, goddess of the moon.
4. short summary.
5. chief god
6. unconquerable.
7. gust of wind.
8. see.
9. pray.
10. sworn not to grant.
11. negotiate.
12. soothe.

Coriolanus. Yes, she is the noble sister of Publius Valerius; she is the goddess of chastity among Roman women; she is as chaste as is the icicle that is frozen by the frost from snow and hangs on the temple of Diana. She is my dear Valeria.

Volumnia. Here is your son, a small version of yourself. He will grow to be as noble and brave as you when time has set its mark of years upon him.

Coriolanus. May Mars, the god of war, with the consent of the supreme god Jove, shape your thoughts in all nobleness, so that you may prove unconquerable and may never suffer the shame of defeat and so that you may stand out firmly in the wars like some conspicuous mark at sea standing firm against every blast, and a refuge for all who can see you in their distress.

Volumnia. Kneel before your father, boy.

Coriolanus. That is my brave son!

Volumnia. Even your son, this lady who is your wife, and myself have come to make an appeal to you.

Coriolanus. I entreat you to be silent. Or, if you must make a demand, bear this in mind before you speak anything. Though by my oath I am pledged to refuse your demand, you should not look upon my inability as a refusal to entertain your demand. Do not ask me to dismiss my soldiers or to enter into negotiations with the artisans of Rome. Do not speak to me of what seems unnatural in my behaviour towards you and towards my country. Do not have the desire to soothe my anger and my revenge with your more moderate arguments.

Volumnia. O, speak no more in this manner, speak no more! You have said that you will not grant us any concession, because we have nothing else to ask but that which you have already refused to grant to us. Yet we feel compelled to make our request, so that if we fail to obtain what we ask, the

That, if you fail in our request, the blame
May hang upon your hardness : therefore hear us.

Cor. Aufidius, and you Volsces, mark ; for we'll
Hear *nought*[1] from Rome in private. Your request ?

Vol. Should we be silent and not speak, our *raiment*[2]
And state of bodies would *bewray*[3] what life
We have led since thy exile. Think with thyself
How more unfortunate than all living women
Are we come *hither*[4] : since that thy sight, which should
Make our eyes flow with joy, hearts dance with comforts,
Constrains[5] them weep and shake with fear and sorrow :
Making the mother, wife and child to see
The son, the husband and the father tearing
His country's *bowels*[6] out. And to poor we
Thine enmity's most *capital*[7] : *thou barr'st*[8] us
Our prayers to the gods, which is a comfort
That all but we enjoy ; for how can we,
Alas, how can we for our country pray,
Whereto we are bound, together with thy victory,
Whereto we are bound ? alack, or we must lose
The country, our dear nurse, or else thy person,
Our comfort in the country. We must find
An evident calamity, though we had
Our wish, which side should win : for either thou
Must, as a foreign *recreant*[9], be led
With *manacles*[10] thorough our streets, or else
Triumphantly tread on thy country's ruin,
And bear the palm for having bravely shed
Thy wife and children's blood. For myself, son,
I purpose not to wait on fortune till

1. nothing.
2. clothes.
3. reveal.
4. here.
5. compels.
6. depths.
7. fatal.
8. youp revent.
9. deserter; apostate.
10. fetters.

blame may rest upon you for your obstinacy and not on us for any want of persistence on our part. Therefore listen to us.

Coriolanus. Aufidius, and you Volscians, pay attention ; for I will listen to nothing from Romans in private. (*To* Volumnia) What is your request ?

Volumnia. Even if we were to remain silent and not say anything, the condition of our clothes and the condition of our bodies would clearly show what kind of life we have been leading since the time of your banishment. Consider within yourself how much more unfortunate than all living women we are in having to come here on such a mission ; because the sight of you, which should draw tears of joy from our eyes and should thrill our hearts with pleasure, compels our eyes to shed tears of sadness and our hearts to tremble with fear and grief, making the mother, the wife, and the child see the son, the husband, and the father destroying his country to its very roots and depths. And your enmity is most destructive to ourselves, wretched as we are. You prevent us from sending up our prayers to the gods, which is a comfort that all enjoy except ourselves ; because how can we possibly pray for our country, to do which we are duty bound, and at the same time pray for your victory, to do which we are equally bound (being your nearest relatives). Alas ! Either we must lose our dear country on the soil of which we have been brought up or we must lose you who have been a source of comfort for us in our country. Even if our wish were fulfilled as to which side should be victorious in this conflict, we must obviously prepare ourselves to face a calamity ; you, who are no longer a Roman, having deserted your country, must be led in chains and fetters through our streets or you must triumphantly trample upon your ruined country and win the reward of having bravely shed the blood of your wife and children. So far as I am concerned, my son, I propose not to trust to my luck and wait till

These wars *determine*[1] : if I cannot persuade thee
Rather to show a noble grace to both parts
Than seek the end of one, thou shalt no sooner
March to assault thy country than to tread—
Trust to't, thou shalt not—on thy mother's womb,
That brought thee to this world.

Vir. Ay, and mine,
That brought you forth this boy, to keep your name
Living to time.

Young Mar. A' shall not tread on me ;
I'll run away till I am bigger, but then I'll fight.

Cor. Not of a woman's tenderness to be,
Requires nor child nor woman's face to see.
I have sat too long. [*Rising.*

Vol. Nay, go not from us thus.
If it were so that our request did tend
To save the Romans, thereby to destroy
The Volsces whom you serve, you might condemn us,
As *poisonous of*[2] your honour : no ; our suit
Is, that you reconcile them : while the Volsces
May say "This mercy we have show'd" ; the Romans,
"This we received" ; and each in either side
Give the *all-hail*[3] to thee, and cry "Be blest
For making up this peace !" Thou know'st, great
son,
The end of war's uncertain, but this certain,
That, if thou conquer Rome, the benefit
Which thou shalt thereby reap is such a name,
Whose repetition will be *dogg'd*[4] with curses ;

1. come to an end.

2. as injurious to.

3. all blessings and greetings.

4. followed.

these wars come to an end. If I cannot prevail on you rather to show a noble grace to both sides than to aim at the fulfilment of the desire of the Volscians to destroy Rome, then you shall no sooner march to overrun your country than you shall have to trample upon — and I assure you that I am speaking in right earnest—your mother's womb which brought you forth into this world.

Virgilia. Yes, and on my womb which brought forth this boy, your son, into this world in order to keep your name alive for future times.

Young Murcius. And you shall not tread on me. I will run away till I am grown up, and then (when I am grown up) I will fight against you.

Coriolanus. To avoid yielding to womanly tenderness, one should not see the face of a child or of a woman. I have sat too long in your company. (*Rising*)

Volumnia. No, do not leave us in this manner. If our prayers to you to save the Romans make it necessary for you to destroy the Volscians, whose servant you now are, then you might condemn us as asking something which would strike a death-blow to your honour. No ; our prayer to you is that you should bring about a reconciliation between the Romans and the Volscians so that the Volscians may proudly claim that they have shown mercy and the Romans may humbly acknowledge the mercy shown to them, and so that both sides should greet you with acclamations of honour such as are addressed to kings, and should bless you in loud voices for bringing about peace. You know, my great son, that the end of the war is uncertain. But that which is certain is that, if you conquer Rome, the benefit which you shall reap by that conquest will be to earn a name the mention of which will each time be followed with curses, and a name the history of which will be written in the following words: "This man was noble but with his last attempt he blotted

Whose *chronicle*[1] thus writ : "The man was noble,
But with his last attempt he wiped it out ;
Destroy'd his country, and his name remains
To the *ensuing*[2] age *abhorr'd*[3]". Speak to me, son :
Thou hast affected the fine strains of honour,
To imitate the graces of the gods ;
To tear with thunder the wide cheeks o' the air,
And yet to charge thy sulpher with a *bolt*[4]
That should but *rive*[5] an oak. Why dost not speak ?
Think'st thou it honourable for a noble man
Still to remember wrongs ? Daughter, speak you :
He cares not for your weeping. Speak thou, boy :
Perhaps thy childishness will move him more
Than can our reasons. There's no man in the world
More bound *to's*[6] mother ; yet here he lets me *prate*[7]
Like one i' the stocks. Thou hast never in thy life
Show'd thy dear mother any courtesy,
When she, poor hen, fond of no second brood,
Has cluck'd thee to the wars, and safely home,
Loaden with honour. Say my request's unjust,
And *spurn*[8] me back : but if it be not so,
Thou art not honest : and the gods will *plague*[9] thee,
That thou *restrain'st*[10] from me the duty which
To a mother's part belongs. He turns away :
Down, ladies ; let us shame him with our knees.
To his *surname*[11] Coriolanus 'longs more pride
Than pity to our prayers. Down : an end ;
This is the last : so we will home to Rome,
And die among our neighbours. Nay, *behold's*[12] :

1. history.
2. coming ; future.
3. hated.
4. thunder-bolt.
5. tear.
6. to his.
7. chatter.
8. send away unsatisfied.
9. torture.
10. withhold
11. title.
12. see this.

out his claim to be called noble. He destroyed his country and consequently his name remains to be detested by all the coming ages." Speak to me, son ; it has always been your aim to show the most honourable feelings and impulses; you have emulated the high qualities of the gods, and like the gods, you have shown the capacity to thunder in tones which strike terror in every heart and yet, like those same gods, you have shown the capacity for mercy so as to let the lightning of your wrath fall and destroy only an oak tree. Why do you not speak ? Do you think it honourable for a noble man to continue to remember the wrongs that were done to him ? Daughter, you speak ; your tears have no effect upon him. Boy, you speak, perhaps your childishness will have more effect upon him than our arguments can have. There is no man in the world who owes a deeper debt of gratitude to his mother than Marcius owes to me ; yet here he lets me talk idly like one sitting in the stocks and begging the passers-by for pity. You have never in your life shown any courtesy to your dear mother when she, whose love was given to you alone and who never had any desire for other children, proudly used to send you forth to the wars and as proudly to welcome you on your return home, covered with glory. If you can truthfully say that my request is one which I have no right to make, then you may well send me back unsatisfied. But if it be not so, then you are not honest, and the gods will severely punish you for failing to show me that dutiful obedience which a son ought to show to his mother. He turns away ; kneel, ladies ; let us try to make him feel ashamed of himself by kneeling before him. His pride in his title of Coriolanus is greater than in his pity which we have tried to stir with our prayers. Kneel and then we will make an end of our prayers. This is our last attempt ; so we will go back to our Rome and die with those who are our friends (instead of staying with one who is now

This boy, that connot tell what he would have,
But kneels and holds up hands for fellowship,
Does reason our *petition*[1] with more strength
Than thou hast to deny't. Come, let us go :
This fellow had a Volscian to his mother ;
His wife is in Corioli and his child—
Like him by chance. Yet give us our *dispatch*[2] :
I am hush'd until our city be afire,
And then I'll speak a little.

[*He holds her by the hand, silent.*

Cor. O mother, mother !
What have you done ? Behold the heavens do *ope*[3],
The gods look down, and this unnatural scene
They laugh at. O my mother, mother ! O !
You have won a happy victory to Rome ;
But, for your son,—believe it, O, believe it,
Most dangerously you have with him prevail'd
If not most *mortal*[4] to him. But, let it come.
Aufidius, though I cannot make true wars,
I'll frame convenient peace. Now, good Aufidius,
Were you in my *stead*[5], would you have heard
A mother less ? or granted less, Aufidius ?

Auf. I was moved withal.

Cor. I dare be sworn you were :
And, sir, it is no little thing to make
Mine eyes to sweat compassion. But, good sir,
What peace you'll make, advise me : for my part,
I'll not to Rome, I'll back with you ; and pray you,

1. prayer.
2. departure.
3. open.
4. deadly ; fatal.
5. place.

a stranger to us). No, look at this ; this boy who does not even know what he is asking for but kneels and holds up his hands merely to join us, and who thereby furnishes a stronger argument in support of our prayer than any with which you can reject it. Come, let us go. This fellow had a Volscian woman as his mother ; his wife is some woman in Corioli ; and this child who bears his name resembles him because of some accident and not because of any relationship with him. Yet give us permission to return. I will speak no more words of reproach until our city is set on fire and then I will have a little to say. (*He holds her by the hand, silent*)

Coriolanus. O, mother, mother ! What have you done ? Look, the heavens do open ; the gods look down and they laugh at this un-natural scene which has been enacted between you and me. O my mother, mother ! O ! you have won a happy victory on behalf of Rome. But, believe it, o, believe it, the victory you have gained over your son will be most dangerous, if not fatal, to him. But I will endure the fatal stroke if it falls upon me. Aufidius, although I have not been able to pursue this war in accordance with the wishes of the Volscians, I will yet negotiate a peace in which their interests will be adequately maintained. Now, good Aufidius, if you had been in my place, would you have listened to a mother's pleadings with greater sternnsss, or would you have granted less to her, Aufidius ?

Aufidius. I was myself touched by your mother's entreaties.

Coriolanus. I can swear to it that you were moved. And, sir, it is not an easy thing to draw from my eyes tears of pity which can be forced from my heart with as great an effort as is necessary to make my body perspire. But, good sir, tell me on what terms you want me to make peace with Rome. So far as I am concerned, I will not go to Rome but I will go back with you. And I pray to you to sup-

Stand to me in this cause. O mother ! wife !

Auf. [*Aside*] I am glad thou hast set thy mercy and thy honour
At difference[1] in thee : out of that I'll work
Myself a former fortune.

1. mutually opposed.

[*The Ladies make signs to* CORIOLANUS.

Cor. Ay, by and by ;

[*To* VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, *etc.*

But we will drink together ; and you shall *bear*[2]
A better witness back than words, which we,
On *like*[3] conditions, will have counter-seal'd.
Come, enter with us. Ladies, you deserve
To have a temple built you : all the swords
In Italy, and her *confederate arms*[4],
Could not have made this peace. [*Exeunt.*

2. carry.

3. acceptable (or, similar)

4. allied arm *is*.

SCENE IV
Rome. A public place.
[*Enter* MENENIUS *and* SICINIUS.]

Men. See you yond *coign*[5] o' the Capitol, yond corner-stone ?

5. corner.

Sic. Why, what of that ?

Men. If it be possible for you to displace it with your little finger, there is some hope the ladies of Rome, especially his mother, may prevail with him. But I say there is no hope in't : our throats are sentenced and stay upon execution.

port me, against all complaints that may be made against me by the Volscians. O, mother! O, wife!

Aufidius. (*To himself.*) I rejoice to see that you have brought your honour and your mercy into conflict with each other in this matter; now I will use this opportunity as a means of restoring myself to the high position which I formerly held. (*The ladies make signs to Coriolanus.*)

Coriolanus. (Speaking to acknowledge the signs made by the ladies) Yes, very shortly. But before you go, we will drink together in token of the harmony between us; and you shall carry with you a stronger evidence, than mere words, of the terms and conditions which you hope to obtain and which we will have counter-sealed. Come, enter with us. Ladies, you deserve to have a temple built in your honour. All the swords in Italy and all the weapons of the allies of Italy could not have brought about this treaty between Romans and Volscians which you have brought about. (*They all make their exit.*)

ACT V SCENE IV

Rome. A public place.

(*Enter* Menenius *and* Sicinius.)

Menenius. Do you notice that corner of the Capitol, that corner-stone?

Sicinius. Why, what has that got to do with the matter we are discussing?

Menenius. There is as much hope of the ladies of Rome, especially his mother, prevailing upon him as there is of your being able to dislodge that corner-stone with your little finger. (Just as it is not possible for you to dislodge that corner-stone with your little finger, so there is no possibility of the ladies of Rome, especially his mother, succeeding in preventing Marcius from destroying Rome.) But I say that there is no hope of that. We have already been sentenced and are now waiting for the sentence to be carried out.

Sic. Is't possible that so short a time can alter the *condition*[1] of a man?

1. disposition.

Men. There is differency between a *grub*[2] and a butterfly; yet your butterfly was a grub. This Marcius is grown from man to dragon: he has wings; he's more than a creeping thing.

2. larva of butterfly.

Sic. He loved his mother dearly.

Men. So did he me: and he no more remembers his mother now than an eight-year-old horse. The *tartness of his face*[3] sours ripe grapes: when he walks, he moves like an engine, and the ground shrinks before his *treading*[4]: he is able to pierce a *corslet*[5] with his eye; talks like a *knell*[6], and his hum is a *battery*[7]. He sits in his state, as a thing *made for*[8] Alexander. What he bids be done is finished with his bidding. He wants nothing of a god but *eternity*[9] and a heaven to throne in.

3. his sour looks.
4. footsteps.
5. leather-and-iron covering for the body.
6. death-bell.
7. firing of cannon.
8. made to represent.
9. immortality.

Sic. Yes, mercy, if you report him truly.

Men. I paint him in the character. Mark what mercy his mother shall bring from him: there is no more mercy in him than there is milk in a male tiger; that shall our poor city find: and all this is long of you.

Sicinius. Is it possible that so short a time can change the nature of a man ? (Is it possible for the nature of a man to undergo a change in such a short time ?)

Menenius. There is a difference between a grub and a butterfly ; yet a butterfly starts as a grub. This Marcius has grown from a man to a dragon ; he has now acquired wings. If previously he could be compared to a grub which creeps on the ground, now he may be compared to a butterfly which can fly about in the air.

Sicinius. But he used to love his mother.

Menenius. There was a time when he loved me also ; but now he remembers his mother no more than an eight-year old horse remembers his dam (and he has now forgotten his mother as completely as an eight-year-old horse forgets his dam.) His face bears such a sour look that even ripe grapes would turn sour in his presence ; when he walks, he moves like some mighty war-machine, and the ground seems to shrink as he treads upon it ; he is able to pierce a corslet with his sharp eyes ; his voice is like the sound of a death-bell ; and when he clears his throat, it is like the firing of a cannon. He sits in his exalted chair as though he were playing the role of Alexander, the Great. When he gives an order for something to be done, his order is carried out as soon as it is given. He is a god in everything except that he is not immortal and that he has no heaven in which he can be enthroned.

Sicinius. Yes, if you describe his character correctly, he is also lacking in another quality of the gods, namely, mercy.

Menenius. I have painted him in his true character. Just observe what mercy his mother shall obtain from him. There is no more mercy in him than there is milk in a male tiger ; our wretched city is going to find out that. And all this is because of you, the tribunes.

Sic. The gods be good unto us !

Men. No, in such a case the gods will not be good unto us. When we banished him, we respected not them ; and, he re'urning to break our necks, they respect not us.

[*Enter a* Messenger.]

Mess. Sir, if you'ld save your life, *fly*[1] to your
house :
The *plebeians*[2] have got your fellow-tribune
And *hale*[3] him up and down, all swearing, if
The Roman ladies bring not comfort home,
They'll give him death by inches.

[*Enter a second* Messenger.]

Sic. What's the news ?

Sec. Mess. Good news, good news ; the ladies have
prevail'd,
The Volscians are dislodged, and Marcius gone :
A merrier day did never yet greet Rome,
No, not the expulsion of the Tarquins.

Sic. Friend,
Art thou certain this is true ? is it most certain ?

Sec. Mess. As certain as I know the sun is fire :
Where have you *lurk'd*[4], that you make doubt of it ?
Ne'er through an arch so hurried the *blown*[5] tide,
As the recomforted through the gates. Why, *hark*[6]
you !

[*Trumpets ; hautboys ; drums beat ; all together.*

The trumpets, *sackbuts*[7], *psalteries*[8] and *fifes*[9],
Tabors[10] and *cymbals*[11] and the shouting Romans,
Make the sun dance. Hark you ! [*A shout within.*

Men. This is good news :

1. flee.
2. commoners.
3. drag.
4. hidden.
5. swollen.
6. listen.
7,8,9,10,11. names of different musical instruments.

Sicinius. May the gods be kind towards us!

Menenius. No, in such a case the gods will not be kind towards us. When we banished him, we showed no respect for the will of the gods; and now when he is coming back to break our necks, the gods are not expected to show any respect for our wishes.

(*Enter a* Messenger.)

Messenger. Sir, if you have any desire to save your life, flee to your house. The commoners have caught hold of your fellow Tribune and are dragging him this way and that way, all of them swearing that, if the Roman ladies fail to bring good news from Marcius, they will put your fellow-tribune to death by slow torture.

(*Enter Second* Messenger)

Sicinius. What is the news?

Second Messenger. Good news; cheering news. The ladies have succeeded in their mission; the Volscians have broken up their camps; and Marcius is gone back. There never was a happier day in the history of Rome, not even the day on which Tarquinius Superbus was expelled.

Sicinius. Friend, are you sure that this news is true? Is there not the least doubt about it?

Second Messenger. I am as certain that this news is true as I am certain that the sun is fire. Where have you been hiding yourself that you feel doubtful about the truth of this news? Never did a tide, swollen by the wind, flow through an arch with greater haste than the Roman multitudes showed when they rushed through the gates after they had received the news which gave them fresh comfort. Why, just you listen to those sounds! (*The blowing of trumpets is heard; hautboys are blown; drums are beaten; all together.*) The trumpets, sackbuts, psalteries, fifes, tabors and cymbals are all sounding and the Romans are shouting joyfully so that even the

I will go meet the ladies. This Volumnia
Is worth of consuls, senators, *patricians*[1],
A city full; of tribunes, such as you,
A sea and land full. You have pray'd well to-day:
This morning for ten thousand of your throats
I'ld not have given a *doit*[2]. Hark, how they joy!
[*Music still, with shouts.*

Sic. First, the gods bless you for your *tidings*[3]; next,
Accept my thankfulness.

Sec. Mess. Sir, we have all
Great cause to give great thanks.

Sic. They are near the city?

Sec. Mess. Almost at point to enter.

Sic. We will meet them,
And help the joy. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V

The same. A street near the gate

[*Enter two* Senators *with* VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, VALERIA, *etc., passing over the stage, followed by* Patricians, *and others.*]

First Sen. Behold[4] our *patroness*[5], the life of Rome!
Call all your *tribes*[6] together, praise the gods,
And make triumphant fires; *strew*[7] flowers before them:
Unshout[8] the noise that banish'd Marcius,
Repeal[9] him with the welcome of his mother;
Cry "Welcome, ladies, welcome!"

All. Welcome, ladies,
Welcome!

[*A flourish with drums and trumpets*[10]. *Exeunt.*

1. nobles.
2. a small coin.
3. news.
4. see.
5. benefactor.
6. people of different areas.
7. scatter.
8. cancel.
9. re-call.
10. beating of drums and blowing of trumpets.

sun seems to dance and participate in their rejoicings. This Volumnia is worth a whole city full of consuls, senators, and noblemen. And so far as the tribunes like you are concerned, she is worth a whole sea and a whole land full of them. You have prayed well today. Only a few hours ago I would not have given a half-penny for the lives of ten thousand persons like you. Listen, how they are rejoicing! (*Music, accompanied with shouts, continues.*)

Sicinius. Firstly, I pray to the gods to bless you for the good news you have brought, and secondly I ask you to accept my gratitude.

Second Messenger. Sir, we all have a strong reason to offer our deep gratitude.

Sicinius. Are they close to the city?

Second Messenger. They are almost about to enter the city.

Sicinius. We will meet them and help with our voices to swell the rejoicings. (*They leave.*)

ACT V SCENE V

The same. A street near the gate.

(*Enter two* Senators *with* Volumnia, Virgilia, Valeria, *etc. passing over the stage, followed by the nobles and others.*)

First Senator. See this lady, our great benefactor, to whom Rome owes its life. Call all your tribes together, praise the gods, and light fires to celebrate this glad occasion. Scatter flowers in their path. Cancel the shouts with which you banished Marcius by still louder ones in his honour. Give a welcome to his mother, at the same time recalling him to Rome. Cry, "Welcome, ladies, welcome."

All. Welcome, ladies, welcome.

(*Drums are beaten and trumpets are blown in honour of the ladies.*) (*They all leave.*)

SCENE VI

Antium. A public place.

[*Enter* TULLUS AUFIDIUS, *with* Attendants.]

Auf. Go tell the lord o' the city I am here :
Deliver them this paper : having read it,
Bid them *repair*[1] to the market-place ; where I,
Even in theirs and in the commons' ears,
Will *vouch*[2] the truth of it. Him I accuse
The city *ports*[3] by this hath enter'd and
Intends to appear before the people, hoping
To *purge*[4] himself with words : *dispatch*[5].
[*Exeunt* Attendants.

[*Enter three or four* Conspirators *of* AUFIDIUS' *faction.*]

Most welcome !

First Con. How is it with our general ?

Auf. Even so
As with a man by his own alms *empoison'd*[6],
And with his charity *slain*[7].

Sec. Con. Most noble sir,
If you do hold the same *intent*[8] wherein
You wish'd us parties, we'll deliver you
Of your great danger.

Auf. Sir, I cannot tell :
We must proceed as we do find the people.

Third Con. The people will remain uncertain whilst
'*Twixt*[9] you there's difference ; but the *fall*[10] of either
Makes the survivor heir of all.

1. go.
2. testify to.
3. gates.
4. clear ; exonerate.
5. hurry up.
6. poisoned.
7. killed.
8. purpose.
9. between.
10. decline or death.

ACT V : SCENE VI

Antium. A public place.

(*Enter* Tullus Aufidius, *with* Attendants.)

Aufidius. Go and tell the lords of the city that I am here. Hand over this paper to them. When they have read it, ask them to go to the market-place, where, in their hearing and in the hearing of the commoners, I will give full proof in support of the truth of the contents of this paper. The man against whom I have brought accusations has by this time entered the city gates and intends to appear before the people in the hope of speaking to them and clearing himself, with his spoken words, of the charges to be brought against him. Leave quickly. (*Leave* Atttendants.)

(*Enter three or four* Conspirators *of* Aufidius's *party*.)

You are most welcome.

First Conspirator. How is our general getting on ? (How are you, our general, getting on ?)

Aufidius. I am in the position of a man who is poisoned by the alms he gave away in his generosity, and murdered with the very charity which he gave in his large-heartedness.

Second Conspirator. Most noble sir, if you stick to the purpose for which you desire our co-operation, we will deliver you of the great danger which threatens you.

Aufidius. Sir, I do not know. Our actions must be guided by the temper in which we find the citizens.

Third Conspirator. The temper of the people will remain uncertain as long as there is a dispute between you and Coriolanus ; but as soon as one of you has fallen (or, been killed), the survivor will get all the power in his hands.

Auf. I know it ;
And my ***pretext***[1] to strike at him admits
A good construction. I raised him, and I ***pawn'd***[2]
Mine honour for his truth : who being so ***heighten'd***[3],
He water'd his new plants with dews of flattery,
Seducing so many friends ; and, to this end,
He ***bow'd***[4] his nature, never known before
But to be rough, ***unswayable***[5] and free.

Third Con. Sir, his ***stoutness***[6]
When he did stand for consul, which he lost
By lack of stooping,—

Auf. That I would have spoke of :
Being banish'd for't, he came unto my hearth ;
Presented to my knife his throat : I took him ;
Made him joint-servant with me ; gave him way
In all his own desires ; nay, let him choose
Out of my ***files***[7], his project to accomplish,
My best and freshest men ; served his ***designments***[8]
In mine own person ; ***holp***[9] to reap the fame
Which he did end all his ; and took some pride
To do myself this wrong : till, at the last,
I seem'd his follower, not partner, and
He ***waged me***[10] with his ***countenance***,[11] as if
I had been ***mercenary***[12].

First Con. So he did, my lord :
The army ***marvell'd***[13] at it, and, in the last,
When he had ***carried***[14] Rome and that we look'd
For no less ***spoil***[15] than glory,—

Auf. There was it,
For which my ***sinews***[16] shall be stretch'd upon him.

1. excuse.
2. pledged.
3. raised.
4. humbled.
5. uncontrollable.
6. stubornness.
7. troops.
8. designs.
9. helped.
10. rewarded me.
11. (patronizing) looks.
12. hired worker.
13. wondered.
14. conquered.
15. plunder.
16. muscles.

Aufidius. I know that ; and I can easily give a convincing character to my pretext for ruining him. I raised him to a high status and I pledged my honour for his sincerity. Being raised to this high position, he strengthened his new sources of support with the nourishing power of flattery, thus luring many of my friends to his side ; and, to achieve this object, he humbled his nature which has always been known before as being rough and as being subject to neither any control nor any restraints.

Third Conspirator. Sir, the stubbornness which he showed when he was a candidate for the election to the consulship which he lost because he refused to bend,—

Anfidius. I intended to mention that also. Having heen banished for that, he came to my house and offered his throat to my knife. I accepted him ; gave him joint command of the forces with me ; allowed him perfect freedom of action in all his plans ; not only that, I allowed him to select from my own troops my best and freshest soldiers in order to enable him to execute his projects ; I helped him to carry out his designs by giving him my own personal services ; I helped him to reap the fame which he gathered for himself alone ; and I felt some honest pride in thus injuring my own interests in order to do him some good. But the result at the end was that I began to appear as his subordinate, and not his partner, and he treated me as a hireling whose services could be bought and were well paid for by his patronizing looks.

First Conspirator. That is exactly what he did, my lord. The troops were simply amazed by what he did and, in the end, when he had almost captured Rome and when we waited as much to plunder the city as to win glory,—

Aufidius. That was the very matter for which I will use my utmost efforts to destroy him. Seeing women shed a few tears, which are shed with the

At a few drops of women's *rheum*[1], which are
As cheap as lies, he sold the blood and labour
Of our great *action*[2] : therefore shall he die,
And I'll *renew me*[3] in his fall. But, *hark*[4] !

[*Drums and trumpets sound, with great shouts of the people.*

First Con. Your native town you enter'd like a *post*[5],
And had no welcomes home ; but he returns,
Splitting the air with noise.

Sec. Con. And patient fools,
Whose children he hath *slain*[6], their base throats tear
With giving him glory.

Third Con. Therefore, at your *vantage*[7],
Ere[8] he express himself, or move the people
With what he would say, let him feel your sword,
Which we will second. When he lies along,
After your way his tale *pronounced*[9] shall bury
His reasons with his body.

Auf. Say no more :
Here come the lords.

[*Enter the* Lords *of the city.*]

All the Lords. You are most welcome home.

Auf. I have not deserved it.
But, worthy lords, have you *with heed*[10] *perused*[11]
What I have written to you ?

Lords. We have.

1. tears.
2. enterprise.
3. regain my position.
4. listen.
5. messenger.
6. killed.
7. opportunity.
8. before.
9. narrated.
10. carefully
11. read ; gone through.

same ease with which lies are told, he bartered away all the lives we have lost and all the labours we had undergone in our great enterprise. Therefore, he must be killed and, in his downfall, I will regain my former high position. But, listen ! (*The sounds of drums aud trumpets are heard, accompanied with great shouting by the people.*)

First Conspirator When you entered your native town, you did so with no more ceremony than attends a messenger bringing news, and you were given no popular welcome on returning home ; but he returns in the midst of such a welcoming noise as seems to split the air.

Second Conspirator. And the long-suffering fools whose sons he murdered (when he fought against Volscians) are proving degraded enough to split their throats by shouting loud in honour of him.

Third Conspirator. Therefore, as soon as the opportunity offers itself, before he can explain his conduct or win the people to his side with what he may have to say, let him feel the stab of your sword which will be immediately followed by our swords. When he lies stretched as a corpse, the story of his behaviour, which you will tell as you may please to tell it, will act as the grave of the arguments he may plead, just as the earth will serve as a grave for his body.

Aufidius. Do not say any more on this subject. Here come the lords.

(*Enter the* Lords *of the city.*)

All the Lords. You are most welcome home.

Aufidius. I have not done anything to deserve a welcome from you. But, worthy lords, have you carefully gone through what I had written for your consideration ?

Lords. Yes, we have.

First Lord. And grieve to hear't.
What faults he made before the last, I think
Might have found easy fines : but there to end
Where he was to begin and give away
The benefit of our *levies*[1], answering us
With our own charge, making a treaty where
There was a yielding,—this admits no excuse.

1. raising of armies.

Auf. He approaches : you shall hear him.

[*Enter* CORIOLANUS, *marching with drum and colours ; the* Commoners *being with him.*]

Cor. *Hail*[2], lords ! I am return'd your soldier,
No more infected with my country's love
Than when I parted *hence*[3], but still *subsisting*[4]
Under your great command. You are to know
That prosperously I have attempted and
With bloody passage led your wars even to
The gates of Rome. Our *spoils*[5] we have brought home
Do more than *counterpoise*[6] a full third part
The charges of the action. We have made peace
With no less honour to the Antiates
Than shame to the Romans : and we here deliver,
Subscribed[7] by the consuls and patricians,
Together with the seal o' the senate, what
We have *compounded*[8] on.

2. greetings.
3. from here.
4. remainings ; continuing.
5. plunder.
6. counterbalance ; exceed (by)
7. signed.
8. agreed.

Auf. Read it not, noble lords :
But tell the traitor, in the high'st degree
He hath abused your powers.

Cor. Traitor ! how now !

Auf. Ay, traitor, Marcius !

First Lord. And we have felt much hurt to read it. As regards the faults he committed before the final blunder, I think he might have escaped with only a slight punishment but no excuse can be found for the fact that he brought our enterprise to an end at the very point where it should have begun in earnest, that he threw away the whole advantage gained by the raising of our army, gave us for our only reward the burden of the expenditure we had incurred, and made peace at the moment when our enemies were ready completely to surrender.

Aufidius. He is coming; and you shall hear him.

(*Enter* Coriolanus, *marching with drums and banners, the* Commoners *being with him.*)

Coriolanus. Greetings, my lords! I have returned and I am still a soldier at your command; I am still completely free from any feeling of love for my country as I was when I set out on my campaign from here; and I still continue to be obedient to your noble leadership. I have to inform you that my campaign was successful and that, with great slaughter of your enemies, I was able to lead your armies to the very gates of Rome. The spoils and the plunder we have brought home will not only meet the total expenses incurred but exceed the expenditure by as much as a third of that amount. We have made a peace which brings no less honour to the Antiates than it brings shame to the Romans; and we here deliver the terms of the treaty duly signed by the Roman consuls and nobles, and bearing the seal of the senate.

Aufidius. Do not read it, noble lords. But tell this traitor that he has, to the highest degree, misused the power you conferred upon him.

Coriolanus. Have you called me a traitor? What do you mean?

Aufidius. Yes; you are a traitor, Marcius.

Cor. Marcius !

Auf. Ay, Marcius, Caius Marcius : dost thou think
I'll grace thee with that robbery, thy stol'n name
Coriolanus in Corioli ?
You lords and heads o' the state, *perfidiously*[1]
He has betray'd your business, and given up,
For certain *drops of salt*[2], your city Rome,
I say "your city", to his wife and mother.
Breaking his oath and resolution like
A twist of rotten silk, never admitting
Counsel o' the war, but at his nurse's tears
He *whined*[3] and roar'd away your victory,
That *pages*[4] blush'd at him and *men of heart*[5]
Look'd wondering each at other.

Cor. Hear'st thou, *Mars*[6] ?

Auf. Name not *the god*[7], thou boy of tears !

Cor. Ha !

Auf. No more.

Cor. Measureless liar, thou hast made my heart
Too great for what contains it. "Boy !" O slave !
Pardon me, lords, 'tis the first time that ever
I was forced to scold. Your judgments, my brave lords,
Must give this *cur*[8] the lie : and his own notion—
Who wears *my stripes*[9] impress'd upon him ; that
Must bear my beating to his grave—shall join
To thrust the lie unto him.

1. treacherously.
2. tears.
3. whimpered.
4. boy-servants.
5. brave men.
6. the god of war.
7. the god of war.
8. dog.
9. scars of blows given by me.

Coriolanus. You address me as Marcius without using my title !

Aufidius. Yes, I call you Marcius, Caius Marcius. Do you think that here in Corioli I will honour you with the title of Coriolanus to which you have no claim (or, which you have no right to use)? You lords and heads of the state, he has treacherously betrayed the mission with which you had entrusted him, and has given up, for a few tears, the city of Rome which should surely have belonged to you but which he gave away for the sake of his wife and his mother. In doing so he broke his vow and his resolution as if they were no more than a few threads of rotten silk twisted together ; he never paid any heed to the advice of any one as to how the war should be managed ; but the moment his mother began to weap, he began to whimper and then noisily gave away your victory so that the mere boy-attendants felt ashamed of him and brave men looked at one another in surprise at the way he had behaved.

Coriolanus. O god of wars, do you hear how my conduct of this campaign has been described ?

Aufidius. Do not invoke the god of wars, you whimperi g boy.

Coriolanus. What, what are you saying ?

Aufidius. Speak no more.

Coriolanus. You measureless liar, your words have made my heart swell till it threatens to burst my breast. You call me a boy ! O, you slave ! Pardon me, lords, it is the first time that I have ever resorted to the use of the womanish weapon of scolding. My brave lords, I must trust to your judgment to brand this coward as a liar, and his own understanding shall reinforce your judgment to thrust this lie down the throat of this man who still bears on his body the scars of the wounds he received from me, and who must carry to his grave the disgrace of having been thrashed by me.

First Lord. Peace, both, and hear me speak.

Cor. Cut me to pieces, Volsces ; men and lads,
Stain all your *edges*[10] on me. "Boy !" false hound !
If you have *writ*[11] your *annals*[12] true, 'tis there,
That, like an eagle in a dove-cote, I
Flutter'd[13] your Volscians in Corioli :
Alone I did it. "Boy !"

Auf. Why, noble lords,
Will you be put in mind of his blind fortune,
Which was your shame, by this unholy *braggart*[14],
'Fore[15] your own eyes and ears ?

All Consp. Let him die *for't*[1].
All the people. "Tear him to pieces." "Do it presently.[2]"
"He killed my son," "My daughter." "He killed my cousin
Marcus." "He killed my father."
Sec. Lord. Peace, ho ! no *outrage*[3] : peace !
The man is noble and his fame *folds-in*[4]
This *orb*[5] o' the earth. His last offences to us
Shall have *judicious*[6] hearing. Stand, Aufidius,
And trouble not the peace.

Cor. O that I had him,
With six Aufidiuses, or more, his tribe,
To use my lawful sword !
Auf. Insolent villain !
All Consp. Kill, kill, kill, kill, kill him !
[*The* Conspirators *draw*[7] *and kill* CORIOLANUS *who falls* : AUFIDIUS *stands on his body.*

Lords. *Hold*[8], hold, hold, hold !
Auf. My noble masters, hear me speak.
First Lord. O Tullus,—

1. swords.
2. written.
3. history.
4. shook.
5. boastful fellow.
6. before.
7. for it.
8. immediately.
9. violence.
10. spreads over.
11. sphere ; globe.
12. judicial.
13. draw swords.
14. stop.

First Lord. Silence, both of you ; and listen to me.

Coriolanus. Cut me to pieces, you Volscians. Men and lads, thrust all your swords into my body. You dare call me 'boy'! You faithless hound ! If you have written the history of your city correctly, it must be written that here in Corioli I caused the hearts of your Volscians to flutter with fear as an eagle causes the timid doves to flutter in their nest. I did that single-handed and you dare call me 'boy'!

Aufidius Why, noble lords, will you allow this accursed boastful fellow to talk like this in your very presence and in your own hearing and to remind you of the victory which he won through sheer good luck and without deserving it; the victory which was a matter of disgrace for you ?

All Conspirators. Let him die for it.

All the people. "Tear him to pieces". "Do it at once". He killed my son". "He killed my daughter". "He killed my cousin Marcus". "He killed my father".

Second Lord. Quiet, you people ! No violence ; be quiet ! The man is noble and his fame spreads over the whole of this round earth (or, this globe). The offences committed by him recently towards us shall have a judicial hearing. Control yourself, Aufidius, and do not disturb the peace.

Coriolanus. O, if only I could have him with six Aufidiuses, or more, the whole of his race, with the right to use my sword !

Aufidius. Impudent villain !

All Conspirators. Kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, him !

(*The* Conspirators *draw their swords and kill* Coriolanus *who drops down dead* ; Aufidius *stands on his body*)

Lords. Stop, stop, stop, stop !

Aufidius. My noble masters, hear me speak.

First Lord. O, Tullus, what have you done !

Sec. Lord. Thou hast done a deed *whereat*[1] *valour*[2] will weep.
Third Lord. Tread[3] not upon him. Masters all, be quiet;
Put up[4] your swords.
Auf. My lords, when you shall know—as in this rage,
Provoked by him, you cannot—the great danger
Which this man's life did owe you, you'll rejoice
That he is thus *cut off*[5]. Please it your honours
To call me to your senate, I'll *deliver*[6]
Myself your loyal servant, or endure
Your heaviest *censure*[7].

First Lord. *Bear*[8] *from hence*[9] his body;
And mourn you for him: let him be regarded
As the most noble *corse*[10] that ever herald
Did follow to his urn.
Sec. Lord. His own *impatience*[11]
Takes from Aufidius a great part of blame.
Let's[12] make the best of it.
Auf. My *rage*[13] is gone;
And I am struck with sorrow. Take him up.
Help, three o' the *chiefest*[14] soldiers; I'll be *one*[15].
Beat thou the drum, that it speak *mournfully*[16]:
Trail your steel pikes. Though in this city he
Hath widow'd and *unchilded*[17] *many a one*[18],
Which to this hour *bewail*[19] the injury,
Yet he shall have a noble *memory*[20].

[*Exeunt, bearing the body of* CORIOLANUS. *A dead march*[21] *sounded.*

1. at which
2. heroism brave men.
3. trample;
4. sheathe.
5. killed.
6. prove.
7. punishment.
8. carry.
9. from here.
10. dead body.
11. violence.
12. let us.
13. anger.
14. foremost
15. one of the four bearers.
16. sorrowfully.
17. rendered childless.
18. a large number of people.
19. mourn.
20. memorial.
21. music played at a funeral.

———

Second Lord. You have done a deed at which all brave men will weep.

Third Lord. Do not trample upon his dead body. Masters all, be quiet. Put your swords back into their scabbards.

Aufidius. My lords, in your present mood of anger aroused by him, you cannot realize the situation. But when you shall know the great danger which would sooner or later have fallen upon you if this man had lived, you will feel glad that he has thus been killed. If it pleases your honours to summon me before your senate, I will prove myself to be your loyal servant, or submit to any punishment, however heavy, that you may be pleased to inflict upon me.

First Lord. Carry his dead body from here; and mourn his death. Let him be treated as the noblest body ever announced by a herald at the time of a funeral.

Second Lord. His own violence in a great measure excuses Aufidius's deed in killing him. Let us make the best of the situation.

Aufidius. My anger has cooled down and I am stricken with grief. Lift up his dead body. Let three of the foremost soldiers help to carry his dead body; I will be the fourth to lend a hand. Beat the drums to indicate a funeral march. Let your steel pikes be trailed along the ground to show that you are taking out a funeral procession. Although in this city he made many widows by killing their husbands and deprived many parents of their sons whom he slaughtered, and although the bereaved families lament their losses to this hour, yet he shall have a noble memorial. Help.

(*They all leave; carrying the dead body of* Coriolanus. A *funeral march is played.*)

THE END

SHAKESPEARE

THE TRAGEDY OF CORIOLANUS

WITH

Complete Notes & Explanations

CORIOLANUS

Notes and Explanations

Act I, Scene I

I. Summary of the Scene :

During a famine in Rome, the citizens revolt against the Patrician senate. One party enters, holding Marcius as the chief enemy of the people. Another party meets (off-stage) at the Capitol and demands from the senate the appointment of Tribunes, to watch over their interests, and to protect their liberties against the Senate and Consuls.

Menenius Agrippa, a humorous Patrician (aristocrat) and a friend and admirer of Marcius, tries to reason with the rebellious citizens. He narrates to them the parable (story with a moral) of the Belly. He says that once the different organs of the human body revolted against the Belly. They accused the Belly of receiving all the food and of remaining idle, in the centre of the body. The Belly told them that after receiving the food, it sent the best part of it (food) back to the various organs, and kept only the bran (husk) for itself.

Pointing out the moral of this parable, Menenius Agrippa compares the Roman Senate to the Belly and the rebellious citizens to the rebellious organs.

This parable fails to convince the hungry citizens, who refuse to believe that the Senate, like the Belly, keeps for itself only the bran (husk).

Just then Caius Marcius appears on the scene. He holds the citizens in contempt and rebukes them bluntly. He tells them that they are satisfied neither with peace nor with war. Also, that they are fickle-minded and un-dependable. He takes them to task for their revolt against the noble Senate. Further, he reproaches them for their supposition, that the city is well-stored with corn. He wishes that the Senators had allowed him to use his sword, so that he had butchered mercilessly all the rebellious citizens. Marcius, then, informs Menenius that, at the instance of the second party of citizens, the Senate has granted

them the privilege to choose five Tribunes. Two of these are Junius Brutus and Sicinius Velutus.

When Marcius is in the midst of his speech, a messenger arrives and informs him that the Volsces have taken up arms against Rome.

Cominius, Titus Lartius and other Senators, accompanied by Junius Brutus and Sicinius Velutus, enter now. The First Senator says that Marcius was right in warning the Senate against the preparations of the Volscians to attack Rome. Marcius tells the Senators, that the Volscians have a brave leader, named, Tullus Aufidius, whom he (Marcius) admires and hates.

Marcius, next, is asked to serve as a sub-ordinate to Cominius, in the war against the Volscians. All of them, then, leave for the Capitol, where other senators are awaiting them. The First Senator asks the citizens to go away.

Now, only Sicinius and Brutus are left behind. They refer to the excessive pride and haughtiness of Marcius, and wonder why such an arrogant man as he, has agreed to serve as a sub-ordinate under Cominius. Brutus suggests that Marcius has done it with a purpose. Thus, if anything goes wrong, the blame will be laid at the door of Cominius. On the other hand, if the outcome of the war is favourable, Marcius will get the credit, which he does not deserve. Brutus and Sicinius, then, go to see how the business of sending the army is managed.

II. Main Events in the Scene :

1. Because of dearth (scarcity) of corn, the citizens rebel against the Senate.
2. Menenius Agrippa tries to pacify one party of rebellious citizens by narrating to them the parable of the Belly.
3. Marcius insults and bullies the hungry citizens by calling them worthless, undependable and fickle-minded.
4. The second party of the rebellious citizens that meets at the Capitol, secures from the Senate, the privilege of choosing five Tribunes, to look after their interests.

5. Brutus and Sicinius are two of the five Tribunes.
6. News arrives that the Volscians have taken up arms against Rome.
7. Cominius, the Consul, is appointed the general of the Roman army.
8. Marcius agrees to serve as a subordinate under Cominius.
9. Brutus and Sicinius think that Marcius has agreed be second-in-command for a selfish motive.

III. Dramatic Significance of the Scene :

This scene forms a part of the Exposition (introductory section) of the play. It introduces us to the central character or the hero of the play—Marcius (Coriolanus) as well as the main conflict. In fact, this scene can be regarded as a preface to the play. Besides the central figure in the play, this scene introduces to us some of the other important characters, such as Menenius Agrippa, Cominius, and the two Tribunes, Brutus and Sicinius.

Again, this scene refers to the fatal weakness in the character of the tragic hero—Marcius. This weakness turns out to be his pride or arrogance. There are numerous references to Marcius's incurable pride. For example :

First citizen. I say unto you, what he hath done famously, he did it to that end...he did it to please his mother, and to *be partly proud* ; which he is, even to the altitude of his virtue.

Or

Sicinius. Was ever man so *proud* as is this Marcius.

Or

Brutus. The present wars devour him ; he is grown
Too proud to be so valiant.

Some of Marcius's other defects, like his insolence, his short temper and his intense dis-like of the common people, are fully brought out, in this scene. As the scene proceeds, it becomes apparent that there is no love lost between the citizens and Marcius. The First Citizen goes to the length of suggesting that "Caius Marcius is chief enemy to the people" and if the citizens kill him, (Marcius) they will have corn at their own price.

Marcius has nothing but un-qualified contempt for the common people. He insults, bullies and curses them in a very blunt and offensive manner. He calls them worthless, undependable and fickle-minded. Far from sympathising with them in their distress (mis-fortune), he adds injury to insult by heaping curses and charges on them. He says :

You curs,
That like nor peace nor war ? the one affrights you,
The other makes you proud. He that trusts to you,
Where he should find you lions, finds you hares ;
Where foxes, geese, you are no surer, no,
Than is the coal of fire upon the ice,
Or hailstones in the sun.

A little, further, he says to them that if he had a free hand, he would have liked to kill them all :

Would the nobility lay aside their ruth,
And let me use my sword, I'd make a quarry
With thousands of these quarter'd slaves, as high
As 1 could pick my lance.

Marcius is thus revealed, in this scene, as a character who is proud, arrogant, tactless and short-tempered. He is "an aristo-crat, for whom the masses (common people) have no status (position) at all, who has a blind contempt for the common man and is impatient of any claim to consideration or fair dealing put forward by persons not of his own class."

This scene also sheds light on the character of some other important figures in the play. It shows, for instance, that Menenius is a tactful, humorous, good-natured and tolerant aristocrat, who is liked by the citizens and who is inclined to treat them with an affectionate tolerance, so long as they know their place and are content to ascribe their distress to heaven and not to the senate of which he is a member.

Again, this scene concludes with a dialogue between the two Tribunes—Sicinius and Brutus—who later on play an important role in the tragedy of Coriolanus. According to Harley Granville-Barker, "In the twenty five lines or so with which they (Sicinius and Brutus) finish the scene, Shakespeare etches them in memorably for the caustic element in the play they are to prove." Like born politicians they size up their

enemy (i.e. Marcius) and dwell upon the weakness and strength of his position.

The opening scene strikes the key-note of the play. According to John Palmer, "The origin and merits of the political dispute (quarrel) which determines the action of the play are clearly stated in the opening scene. The grievances of the people, the quality of mind and temper in which they are approached alike by the patricians and the plebeians, the attitude of Marcius himself, the watchful sagacity (wisdom) of the popular leaders (Brutus and Sicinius) are in turn dis-closed. Shakespeare states at once the principal themes of his composition, each to be further developed in its appropriate (proper) setting, and he states them with a careful precision, (exact-ness) which calls for an equally careful precision in their analysis".

To conclude, "In the first scene the main conflict of the play is dramatically presented. On the one side are the people, on the other is Marcius, showing at once the fatal pride and contempt for the people which are to prove his down-fall."

IV. Shakespeare's indebtedness to Plutarch.

Shakespeare's main source for Coriolanus is Plutarch. The latter wrote his *Parallel Lives* of eminent Greeks and Romans in Greek in the second century A.D. They were translated into French by Amyot in 1560. Sir Thomas North translated the French version into English in 1579. Shakespeare follows mainly Plutarch for the outstanding events in the life of Coriolanus.

In Act I, Scene I, Shakespeare is indebted to North's Plutarch for the following details :—

(*a*) Coriolanus was a very proud man, but he was not covetous.

(*b*) He performed heroic deeds in order to please his mother.

(*c*) The common people were oppressed by usurers, who were supported by the patricians.

(*d*) Menenius Agrippa was a pleasant old man and the most acceptable to the people.

(*e*) The fable of Belly as told by Menenius to the people and its application to the situation created by the mutinous citizens.

(*f*) The appointment of Tribunes to protect and defend the rights of the people.

(*g*) The prophecy of Coriolanus that evil will result from the policy of granting a concession to the plebeians.

(*h*) The willingness of the people to fight against the Volscians.

Note. Shakespeare's two main departures from Plutarch are (*i*) he combines the two seditions mentioned by Plutarch into one. (Plutarch refers to a sedition caused by lack of corn and another caused by cruel usury laws) ; and (*ii*) he (Shakespeare) refers to the mission of Menenius and the appointment of Tribunes *before* and not *after* the out-break of the Volscian war, thus reversing the order followed by Plutarch.

Stage direction : *Company*—group ; party. *Mutinous*—rebellious. *Staves*—sticks. *Clubs*—cudgels ; thick sticks.

Line 1. *Before we proceed any further*—before we take any further action in the matter.

Lines 4—5. *Resolved*—determined. *Rather to die than to famish*—*i. e.* that you will prefer death in a fight to dying of famine.

Line 7. *Caius Marcius is chief enemy to the people*—Caius Marcius is the greatest opponent of the people, because he wishes that no sympathy should be shown to the people in their misfortune.

(*Chief enemy*=the chief enemy)

Line 9. *We know't*—we know it.

Lines 10—11. *Let us kill him*—let us kill Caius Marcius, who is the chief enemy of the people. *We'll have corn at our own price*—we will be able to buy corn as cheaply as we can wish.

Is't a verdict—"is it your unanimous decision ?" Are you agreed ?

(The first citizen asks the citizens to give their verdict as if they are members of a jury).

Line 12. *Talking on't*—talking of it.

Note. Shakespeare often uses "on" instead of "of"

Let it be done—*i. e.* let Caius Marcius be killed.

Away, away—let us go.

Line 15. *Accounted*—regarded ; considered.

Line 16. *Patricians*—upper classes ; rich and wealthy Romans.

Good—wealthy. *Authority*—those in authority.

Lines 16—17. *What authority surfeits on would relieve us*—*i.e.* that corn, which, those in authority, have beyond their needs, would relieve our distress (mis-fortune).

(The first Citizen means that the Patricians (wealthy Romans) have superfluous corn, and if they give it to plebeians (poor Romans), it will relieve their dis-tress.

If they would yield us—if the Patricians (wealthy Romans) would give us. *But the superfluity*—only the superfluous corn ; merely the corn which they do not need themselves.

Line 18. *While it were wholesome*—while the corn is fit to eat. *Guess*—think ; suppose. *They*—*i.e.* the Patricians (the wealthy Romans) *Relieved*—gave relief to.

Line 19. *Humanely*—prompted by feelings of humanity. *They relieved us humanely*—the Patricians have shown humanity in giving relief to us. *They think*—*i. e.* the Patricians believe. *We are too dear*—"we are not worth the keeping alive at such a cost." It would he too costly to save the poor from starvation by giving them superfluous corn.

Line 20. *The lean-ness that afflicts us*—the lean-ness from which we suffer. *Object*—spectacle. *Misery*—dis-tress ; misfortune.

Line 21. *Inventory*—list. *Particularise*—to make particular.

Lines 21—22. *The object of our misery...abundance*—"the sight of our wretchedness serves to them the same purpose as an inventory (list) of their wealth, for it makes their riches more apparent, each detail of our misery corresponding to some detail of their prosperity."

Line 22. *Abundance*—prosperity. *Sufferance*—suffering.

Our sufferance is a gain to them—our suffering adds a great deal to the way in which they take delight in their prosperity.

Line 23. *Pikes*—pitch-forks (Pitch-fork is a two-pronged instrument with which hay, straw is picked on to a heap).

Note. There is a pun on the word "pikes." A pike means (1) a spear, (2) a pitch-fork. The first citizen, therefore, means "let us attack the Patricians with our spears or let us attack them with our pitch-forks (agricultural implements).

Ere—before. *We become rakes*—we become as thin as rakes.

Note. There is a pun on the word "rakes." Rakes means (a) dis-sipated, immoral men of fashion and (b) agricultural implements consisting of poles with cross-bar toothed like combs at end for drawing together hay, straw etc. or smoothing loose soil or gravel.

Note. The words "*Let us revenge this with our pikes, ere we become rakes*" can be interpreted in two ways : (*a*) Let us take our revenge by attacking the Patricians with our spears, before we become as thin as rakes (dis-sipated, immoral men of fashion) ; and (*b*) let us take our revenge by attacking the patricians with our pitch-forks (agricultural instruments having two prongs) before we are reduced physically so much, that our bones show through our skins like the teeth of a rake (agricultural implement consisting of a pole with cross-bar toothed like comb at end for drawing to-gether hay, straw etc.).

For the gods know—as heaven is my witness.

Line 24. *I speak this in hunger for bread, not in thirst for revenge*—I speak these words because I fear starvation and not because I wish to take revenge.

Note. "Hunger" is used literally ; "thirst," metaphorically. "Thirst" means "ardent desire."

Line 26. *Would you proceed especially against*—would you take action against.

Lines 28—29. *He's a very dog*—he is cruel or savage as a dog, when he worries a flock of sheep.

The Commonality—i.e. the common people.

He's a very dog to the commonality—i.e. Caius Marcius is as cruel and savage while worrying the common people, as a dog is, while worrying a flock of sheep.

Line 30. *Consider you*—do you remember ? do you bear in mind ?

For his country—for Rome.

Line 32. *Very well*—yes, I do bear in mind.

Lines 32—33. *And could be content to give him good report for't*—I should be quite willing to give Marcius full credit for the services, he has done to Rome.

Lines 33—34. *He pays himself with being proud*—"he is satisfied with his own pride, and does not care for our good opinion."

Line 35. *Nay*—no.

Speak not maliciously—do not speak in malice (ill-will).

Lines 36—37. *What he hath done famously*—the famous deeds that Marcius has performed.

He did it to that end—he performed famous actions in order to feed his pride. *Soft-conscienced men*—over-lenient persons.

Line 38. *Can be content*—can be ready.

Lines 39—40. *To be partly*—partly to be.

Line 41. *To the altitude of his virtue*—*i.e.* his pride is as high as his heroism is great.

(*Altitude*=height. *Virtue*=valour ; heroism)

Lines 42—43. *What he cannot help in his nature, you account a vice in him*—*i.e.* you regard a constitutional weakness as a vice.

(The Second Citizen means that Marcius cannot help feeling proud as it is in his nature to do so. This constitutional weakness should not be considered to be a vice).

Lines 43—44. *You must in no way say he is covetous*—any-how you cannot accuse him of greed or avarice.

Lines 45—46. *I need not be barren of accusations*—I can still level other charges against him.

(*Barren of*=without)

Lines 46—47. *He hath faults, with surplus, to tire in repetition*—he has faults enough and to spare and it would be wearisome to mention them.

Line 48. *The other side*—the other side of the city ; the part of the city beyond the river Tiber.

Note. Shakespeare supposes that Rome like London is divided into two parts by the river. This is to say that accord-

ing to him, just as the river Thames divided the city of London, similarly the river Tiber divided the city of Rome.

Is risen—is up in arms.

The Capitol—the temple of Jupiter (president of gods) on the summit of the Capitoline hill.

Note 1. The name "Capitol" is derived from the word "Caput" meaning a human head. It is said that a human head was discovered when the foundations of the temple were being dug.

Note 2. Shakespeare supposes that the meetings of the Roman senate were held at the Capitol.

Line 51. *Soft*—(an exclamation on the stage, calling for silence).

Note —"Soft" may also mean "wait awhile" or "stop."

Stage Direction. *Menenius Agrippa*—he was a Consul and conquered the Sabines. He is described by Plutarch as "the pleasantest old man and the most acceptable to the people."

Line 53. *He's one honest enough*—Menenius Agrippa has plenty of honesty in him, though he is a patrician.

Would—I wish.

Lines 53—54. *All the rest were so*—all the other patricians were honest like Menenius Agrippa.

Line 55. *What work's, my countrymen in hand*—My countrymen what is the work about to be under-taken by you.

Line 57. *Bats*—bludgeons ; cudgels. *Clubs*—sticks. *The matter* ?—what is the immediate business in which you are engaged ?

I pray you—I request you.

Line 59. *Inkling*—hint. *This fortnight*—the past two weeks ; for the last two weeks.

Line 60. *We'll*—we will. *'Em*—them ; *i. e.*, the members of the senate.

Line 61. *Suitors*—petitioners. *Strong*—offensive ; stinking ; strong-smelling.

Note : "Strong" has two meanings (1) strong-smelling and (2) long-winded or noisy.

Poor suitors have strong breaths—poor persons who make

petitions have a strong-smelling (offensive) breath or have a long-winded breath (*i. e.* They can speak loudly and for long).

Line 63. *Masters* –(It is a term of respect)

Line 64. *Undo yourselves*—ruin yourselves.

Line 65. *We are un-done already*—we are already ruined (through famine).

Line 66. *Most charitable care*—most heedful consideration.

Line 67. *Patricians*—rich or wealthy Romans.

For—as ragards ; as for.

Line 68. *Your suffering*—your misery. *In this dearth*—in this famine ; in this scarcity of corn.

As well—i. e. with equal justification.

Line 69. *Strike at the heaven with your staves—i. e.* attack heaven (that is responsible for the famine) with your sticks.

Line 70. *The Roman State*—the Roman Government : those who govern Rome.

Lines 70 – 73. *Whose course will on......appear in your impediment.* **Explanation.** The Roman State, like a determined horse, will continue on its way, in spite of any bit or curb, that is to say, any opposition that you can offer.

Note : This is a metaphor. The Roman state is likened (compared) to a horse, who continues to follow his course, in spite of a mouth-piece (bit) or curb. The opposition that is to be offered by the citizens is compared to the mouth-piece and curb, which try to check or restrain the horse.

(*Cracking*=breaking. *Curbs*=chain or strap passing under lower jaw of a horse, used as a check. *Of more strong link*=more strongly linked together. *Asunder*—apart. *Your impediments*=opposition that you can offer).

Line 73. *Dearth*—scarcity of corn ; famine.

Line 74. *The gods, not the patricians, make it*—the famine has been caused by gods and not by the Roman nobility.

Line 75. *Your knees—i. e.* your prayers.

To them—i. e. gods.

Arms—weapons.

Lines 73—75. *For the dearth......must help*. **Explanatio**– As for the famine, it has been caused by gods and not the Roman nobility ; and for all help against it (the famine), you should pray to gods, rather than take up arms against the Patricians.

Line 75. *Alack*—alas.

Line 76. *Transported*—carried. *Calamity*—misery.

Line 77. *Thither*—to that place. *Attends*—awaits.

Lines 76–77. *You are transported by calamity.. ... attends you*—"you are carried by your misery to a place where greater misfortune still awaits you."

Or

"You are carried away by your mis-fortune to act in such a way as to bring more mis-fortune upon yourselves."

Slander—defame ; utter false report.

Line 78. *Helms*—helmsmen ; men at the helm ; pilots.

The helms o' the state—the persons who are at the helm of the ship of the state ; those who are guiding the ship of the state.

Line 79. *When you curse*—*i. e.* in cursing.

Note : The paraphrase of Lines *78—79* would be : And you slander those who guide the ship of the stâte, who care for you like fathers, in cursing them as enemies.

Line 80. *True indeed*—"that is a pretty tale to tell us !"

Line 81. *Suffer us to famish*—they are satisfied to watch us starve.

Line 82. *Crammed with*—packed with ; filled with. *Edicts for usury*—laws with regard to lending money at interest.

Line 83. *Usurers*—those who lend money on excessive rates of interest. *Repeal*—un-make ; recall. *Whole-some*—beneficial.

Line 83—84. *Repeal daily any whole-some act established against the rich*—cancel or un-make any beneficial law which protects the poor against the rich.

Piercing—severely oppressive ; grinding ; cruel ; rigorous ; harsh.

Line 85. *Statutes*—laws.

Chain up and restrain the poor—enslave and restrict the poor.

Lines 85—86. *If the wars eat us not up*—if the wars do not kill us.

Lines 86—87. *There's all the love they bear us*—that is about all the love they entertain for us.

Line 89. *Wondrous*—wonderfully ; remarkably. *Malicious*—full of ill-will ; full of malice.

Lines 89—90. *Either you must confess......of folly*—either you must admit that you are prompted by ill-will or that you are foolish.

Line 91. *A pretty tale*—an interesting fable. *It may be*—it is possible.

Line 93. *To stale't a little more*—to make it a little more stale by repeating it.

Line 95. *Fob off*—cheat ; put off with a trick. *Our dis-grace*—our humiliation. *With a tale*—by narrating a fable.

Lines 94—95. *You must not think......with a tale*—you must not imagine that by narrating a fable, you will be able to cheat us out of a belief in the humiliation that we have endured.

An't—if it. *Deliver*—tell ; relate.

Line 98. *Re-bell'd*—revolted.

Line 99. *Gulf*—huge hole ; abyss.

Lines 99—100. *That only like......body* that the belly did nothing except remain in the centre of the body like a huge hole or abyss. *Un-active*—inactive.

Line 101. *Cup-boarding*—storing up (as in a cup-board) *Viand*—food.

Bearing—under-going ; enduring.

Line 102. *Like*—equal. *Where*—whereas. *Instruments*—physical and mental organs.

Line 103. *Devise*—plan.

Line 104. *Mutually participate*—"each taking an equal share with the rest." (*Participate*=participating).

Did Minister—rendered help.

Line 105. *Affection*—desire.

Affection common of the whole body—desires and inclinations shared by the whole body.

Line 108. *A kind of smile which ne'er came from the lungs*—a bitter or contemptuous or scornful smile.

Note. To smile "from the lungs" is to smile heartily. The smile of the belly was one of contempt, hence it did not come from lungs.

Line 109. *But even thus*—(Menenius illustrates his statement by himself smiling in a bitter or scornful manner)

Lines 110—111. *For look you, I may......speak*—because, let me inform you, that in a fable, one can make the belly smile as well as speak.

Tauntingly—in a taunting manner.

Line 112. *Dis-contented*—dis-satisfied.

Mutinous—rebellious.

Line 113. *That envied his receipt*—that grudged what the belly received.

Even so most fitly—with just as much reason.

Line 114. *Malign*—speak evil of. *For that*—because.

Line 115. *They are not such as you*—i.e. they (the senators) are different from you.

Even so most fitly as you......such as you—with no greater argument for their speaking evil of the belly, than that which you advance, towards our senators, for being something different from you.

Your belly's answer—let us know what the answer of the belly was.

What!—is it possible that the belly could give any plausible answer.

Line 116. *The kingly crowned head*—i.e. the head which is to the human body what the crown is to the king.

Vigilant—watchful.

Line 117. *The Counsellor heart*—The human heart which is the seat of intelligence; the human heart from which we receive the dictates of wisdom.

The arm our soldier—the human arm which acts as our soldier.

Line 118. *Steed*—horse. *Our steed the leg*—the human leg which is our horse.

The tongue our trumpeter—the human tongue which can be compared to a trumpet.

Line 119. *Muniments*—denfences ; furnishings ; other instruments with which the human body is furnished and armed.

Line 120. *Our fabric*—our body.

If that they—if they.

Line 121. *Fore me*—(It is an oath-like exclamation) ; upon my word ; as God is before me.

This fellow speaks—"what an orator the fellow is growing"; how this fellow can talk.

Line 122. *Cormorant*—the cormorant is a gluttonous sea-bird ; here, it means "gluttonous")

Be restrain'd—i.e. the head, the heart, the arm, the leg the tongue and other limbs of the body should be refused food by the gluttonous body.

Line 123. *Who*—which (i.e. the belly).

The sink o' the body—the belly which serves the same purpose in the human body which a sink serves in a kitchen (*Sink*=place in which filthy things collect and then are drained off).

Line 124. *The former agents*—i.e. the organs referred to above i.e. the head, the heart, etc.

(*Former*=afore-said)

Line 126. *If you'll bestow a small of what you have little*—if you will show me a small amount of patience of which your store is but slight (light).

Line 127. *You'st*—you shall.

Line 128. *You're long about it*—you are taking too much time to tell it.

Note me this—observe this.

Line 129. *Grave*—reverend ; respectable. *Deliberate*—thoughtful.

Line 130. *Rash*—thoughtless. *Accusers*—i.e. those who accused the belly.

Not rash like his accusers—Menenius implies that the Plebeians are rash (thoughtless) in accusing the senators.

Line 131. *Incorporate*—belonging to one body ; belonging to the same body as myself.

Quoth—said. *He* - *i.e.* the belly.

Line 132. *General food*—that food which belongs equally to all parts of the body (*General*=common).

Line 134. *Store-house*—the place where a thing is kept for sale. *Shop*—work-shop, where a thing is made.

Line 137. *The seat o' the brain*—*i.e.* the heart.

Line 138. *Crank*—winding passages. *Offices*—rooms ; parts of a house used for service ; passages running through a house by which food is brought from the kitchen.

Line 139. *Nerves*—sinews.

Line 140. *Competency*—supply, enough to live on.

Line 141. *Though that*—though.

Lines 136—141. *I send it through the rivers of your blood... they live.*—**Explanation.** The body is compared to a kingdom or palace. The king's throne is supposed to be the heart or the seat of brain. The belly sends sufficient sustenance through the passages and chambers of the body to the strongest sinews and petty nervés.

Line 142. *Mark me*—note this point particularly.

Line 143. *Though all at once cannot see what I do deliver out to each*—though all the limbs of the body cannot see what I dis-tribute to each.

Line 145. *Audit*—account.

I can make my audit up—I can prepare my account for examination by all limbs.

Line 146. *Flour*—the best part ; the finer part of meal.

Note. There is a pun on the word 'flour.' It means (1) 'the finer part of meal' and (2) flower.

Line 147. *But*—only. *Bran*—the husk after the flour has been extracted.

Line 148. *It was an answer*—it was a good answer.

How apply you this—how do you apply it to the present circumstances ?

Line 150. *Mutinous*—rebellious.

Line 151. *Their counsels and their cares*—the wise deliberations of senators and the concern they exhibit for the people.

Digest—carefully consider ; turn over in your mind.

Line 152. *Touching*—concerning. *Weal o' the common*—prosperity of the common people.

You shall find—you will find.

Line 154. *But it*—*i.e.* which does not. *Proceeds*—originates.

Line 155. *No way*—in no way.

Line 156. *The great toe*—Menenius realizes that he has not been able to apply the parable successfully to the situation, because he has not been able to cenvince a hungry mob that the rich and powerful keep only the bran for themselves. He, now, gives expression to his annoyance and makes up for the weakness of his cause by abusing a member of the hungry crowd.

Line 158. *For that*—because. *Basest*—most ignoble.

Line 159. *Thou go'st foremost*—*i.e.* like the toe of the foot, you thrust yourself most forward.

Line 160. *Rascal*—lean or worthless deer. *That are worst in blood*—you who are in poor condition ; you who are wanting in spirit.

Line 161. *Lead'st first to win some vantage*—you take the lead in order to win some personal profit (*Vantage*= advantage ; profit).

Line 162. *But make you ready your stiff bats and clubs*—but make ready for yourselves, for your defence, your hard bludgeons and cudgels.

Line 163. *Rome and her rats are at the point of battle*—Rome and her common people (who eat up the corn like rats) will soon be engaged in a struggle or strife.

Line 164. *The one side must have bale*—either Rome or the common people must be ruined in this conflict. (*Bale*= ruin ; destruction ; injury)

Hail—*i.e.* I greet you.

Line 165. *Dissentious*—dis-contented ; seditious.

Line 166—167. *That, rubbing the poor itch of your opinion, make your-selves scabs*—who constantly thinking of and talking about your trifling grievances, make yourselves thoroughly dis-agreeable.

Or

Whose desire to have a say in the affairs of the state is like some bodily irritation, the scratching of which leads to the formation of dis-agreeable sores.

(*Scabs*=sores or filthy rascals).

Line 168. *We have ever your good word*—*i.e.* you always abuse us ("Good" is used, here, in an ironical sense).

Line 170. *Beneath abhorring*—in a way which deserves something worse than abhorrence (contempt). *Curs*—dogs.

Line 171. *That like nor peace nor war*—you who are satisfied with neither peace nor war. *The one*—*i.e.* war. *Affrights you*—frightens you ; fills you with a sense of fear.

Line 172. *The other*—*i.e.* peace. *Makes you proud*—makes you arrogant and puffed up. *Trusts to you*—trusts you ; puts his faith in you.

Line 173. *Where*—in matters in which.

Lions—brave as lions. *Hares*—timid or cowardly as hares.

Line 174. *Where foxes, geese*—in matters in which he expects you to be as cunning as foxes, he discovers you to be as stupid as geese.

Surer—firmer ; to be depended on.

Line 175. *Than is the coal of fire upon the ice*—you lack steadfastness as the coal which quickly burns itself out when put upon ice.

Note. It is probable that this image was suggested to Shakespeare by the fact that the river Thames was frozen over in the severe winter of 1607—8 and fires were burnt on the ice.

Line 176. *Or hailstone in the sun*—you are not to be depended upon as your steadfastness melts as quickly as hail-stones in the sun-shine.

Your virtue is—your excellence consists in.

Line 177—178. *To make him worthy whose offence subdues him, and curse that justice did it*—'to praise the man whose crime brings him under punishment and to curse the laws that punish him.'

Line 178—179. *Who*—he who. *Who deserved greatness deserves your hate*—he who deserves greatness, deserves your hatred.

Line 179—180. *Your affections*—your inclinations. *Your affections are a sick man's appetites*—your inclinations are like the appetites (desires) of a sick person.

Lines 180—181. *Who desires most that which would increase his evil*—who wishes to take most such food as would only make his ill-ness worse. (*Evil*=ill-ness)

Lines 181—183. *He that depends upon your favours...... oaks with rushes*—The person who depends on your favours discovers them to be as heavy as lead instead of as light as fins, that should enable him to swim. Your favours prove as powerless to help him in forcing his way through difficulties as rushes would be to hew down (cut down) oaks.

Hang ye !—curses on you. *Trust ye ?*—no one in his senses can trust you.

Line 184. *You do change a mind*—you change your minds.

Line 185. *That was now your hate*—who was the object of your hatred.

Line 186. *Him vile*—*i.e.* and call him wicked. *That was your garland*—that was regarded by you as an ornament or crowning glory.

Line 187. *Several*—separate ; various.

Line 189. *Under the gods*—as the representatives (*i.e.* the senators are the viceroys of gods).

Keep you in awe—frighten you into subjection.

Which—who. *Else*—otherwise.

Line 190. *Would feed on one another*—*i.e.* would be quarrelling and fighting among themselves.

What's their seeking—what do they (*i.e.* the citizens) want ?

Line 191. *For corn at their own rates*—they desire to have corn at a price which they may choose to fix.

Whereof—for with it.

Line 192. *Hang 'em*—curses on them. *They say —i.e.* they have the cheek to say it.

Line 193. *They'll sit by the fire*—these people sit at home by their fire-places.

Presume—pretend.

Line 194. *What's done i' the Capitol—i.e.* how state affairs are managed by senators who meet at the Capitol.

Like—likely.

Line 195. *Who thrives*—who rises to power. *Who declines*—who falls from power. *Side factions*—they will take sides in political parties ; they will support one party or another.

Give out—proclaim.

Line 196. *Give out conjectural marriages*—they will announce marriages which they only guess are about to take place.

Making parties strong—i.e. in their imagination they will impute power to those whom they admire.

Line 197. *feebling*—en-feebling; weakening. *Such as*—such parties as. *Stand not in their liking*—are not liked or favoured by them.

Line 198. *Below their cobbled shoes—i.e.* trampling (such parties as they dislike) under their feet.

Note. "Below their cobbled shoes" should be connected with 'feebling".

Thus lines 197—198 mean "destroying the party to which they are opposed, as if they would trample it under their feet."

Line 198. *They say there's grain enough*—they have the audacity to suggest that there is sufficient corn.

Line 199. *Would*—I wish. *The nobility*—i.e. the patricians. *Lay aside*—give up. *Ruth*—pity.

Line 200. *Quarry*—a heap of dead bodies.

Line 201. *Quarter'd*—cut in pieces.

Line 202. *Pick*—pitch.

Line 199—202. *Would the nobility lay aside their ruth... pick my lance*—I wish that the Patricians should give up the

attitude of pity and allow me to employ my sword. I will kill them till their bodies which are cut in pieces make a heap as high as I can pitch my lance.

Line 202. *Nay*—no. *There are almost thoroughly persuaded*—they are completely convinced of the folly of their revolt.

Line 203. *Discretion*—prudence ; wisdom.

Line 204. *Passing*—surpassing.

Exceedingly—extremely.

Be-seech—request.

Line 205. *The other troop*—the other party of re-bels. (*Troop* =band ; group).

Line 206. *Dissolv'd*—dispersed. *Hang'em*—curses on them.

Line 207. *An-hungry*—(*An* is an old English preposition, which had a strengthening force) *An hungry*—extremely hungry.

Sigh'd forth proverbs—uttered proverbs in a sad manner.

Line 208. *That hunger broke stone walls*—that nothing could check those who were hungry ; that nothing could place restrictions on hungry people.

Dogs must eat—i.e. even animals must have food ; even the poorest persons must have something to eat.

Line 209. *That meat was made for mouths*—that food was made to be eaten by human beings.

Line 210. *Shreds*—pieces (of cheap wisdom).

Line 211. *They vented their complainings*—they gave expression to their complaints or grievances.

Lines 210—211. *With these shreds......complainings.* **Explanation.** With scraps (pieces ; fragments) of cheap wisodm (proverbs) like these, they gave utterance to their complaints.

Line 211. *Which being answer'd*—when these complaints were answered.

Line 212. *A petition granted them*—the petition which they made, being granted them by the Senate. *A strange one*—a strange petition.

Line 213. *To break the heart of generosity*—a petition which is calculated to lower the position of the aristocracy

(the Patricians).

Generosity—the generous, the noble men, the aristocrats, (the abstract (*i. e.* Generosity) is used for the concrete (*i. e.* the generous people).

Line 214. *And make bold power look pale*—and frighten those men who have been bold and powerful, so far (*i. e.* the Patricians).

Lines 212—214. *And a petition granted them......look pale*—**Explanation.** A strange petition was granted to the rebellious citizens. It was something calculated to humble the Patricians and to strike terror into the hearts of the aristocrats, who, up to now, have been boldly exercising the power entrusted to them.

They threw their caps—the citizens threw up their caps in order to express their joy.

Line 215. *As*—as if. *They would hang them*—they would hang their caps.

Horns o' the moon—extremities of the moon.

Line 216. *Shouting their emulation*—each citizen competing with the other, as to who should proclaim his joy the louder.

Note. Some commentators have interpreted "emulation as "envious contention" or "malicious envy", that is to say, rivalry in a bad sense. It is, however, more reasonable to interpret it as "competition in expressing joy at their victory."

Line 217. *Tribunes*—officers chosen by the people to protect their liberties against the Senate and the Consuls; magistrates chosen annually to watch over the interests of the people.

Their vulgar wisdoms—*i. e.* these wise fellows.

Line 218. *Of their own choice*—to be chosen by themselves (citizens).

Line 219. *And I know not*—I do not remember the names of the remaining three Tribunes. *'Sdeath*—God's death (*i. e.* I swear by the crucifixion of Christ).

Note. *'Sdeath*—is a favourite oath of Elizabethan times. The use of oaths, on the stage, was prohibited by law, hence oaths were contracted to escape the penalty. God's death

(*i. e.* I swear by the death of Christ) was contracted into 'Sdeath.

Line. 220. *The rabble*—the un-ruly crowd.

Lines 220—221. *Should have first un-roof'd the city, ere so prevail'd with me*—should have first destroyed the entire city of Rome, before they would have persuaded me to grant them this privilege.

(He means that he would have not yielded unless the unruly crowd had destroyed the whole city first).

It will in time—it will gradually.

Line 222—*Win upon power*—gain upon power. *Themes*—subjects proposed for arguments.

Line 223 *Insurrection*—*i. e.* in-surgents (abstract for concrete).

Lines 221—223. *It will in time win upon power...... arguing.* **Explanation.** This granting of a privilege to citizens will encroach upon those in power (senators), and give rise to more important claims for rebels to maintain.

This is to say that the citizens will get the better of authority and this fact will give rise to still greater subjects to be discussed by the seditious.

Line 224. *You fragments*—you who are less than complete men.

Line 226. *Are in arms*—have taken up arms.

Line 227. *Glad on't*—glad of it : glad to hear this news. *Shall ha'*—shall have. *Vent*—discharge ; get rid of.

Line 228. *Our musty superfluity*—our worthless fellows of whom we have such an abundance. *We shall ha' means to vent our musty super-fluity*—War with the Volsces will provide us with means to get rid of our un-wholesome and super-fluous population.

Musty=mouldy ; stale ; worthless. *Super-fluity*=super-fluous population) *Elders*—senators.

Line 229. *That*—that which ; what. *Lately*—recently.

'Tis true that you have lately told us—your information, which you gave us recently, that the Volscians are preparing to attack Rome, has turned out to be true.

Line 230. *Are in arms*—have taken up arms (against Home).

They—*i.e.* the Volscians.

Line 281. *That will put you to't*—who will try your mettle ; who will make it necessary for you to do your utmost to resist him.

Line 232. *Envying*—feeling envious of. *His nobility*—his nobleness of character.

Line 233. *But what*—except that which.

Line 234. *I would wish me only he*—I would wish to be none other than he.

Note. 'He' is used in place of "him" here.

Line 235. *Were half to half the world* —were like one half of the world to the other half.

By the ears—fighting.

Note. This metaphor comes from dog-fighting. Dogs, seize each other by ears, when they fight.

Line 236. *Upon my party*—belonging to my half of the world ; siding with me in the quarrel.

I'd revolt—I would change sides.

Lines 236—237. *To make only my wars with him*—to fight against him only.

Lines 235—238. *Were half to the half world by the ears... proud to hunt*—**Explanation**. Marcius means that he and Aufidius took part in a fight in which one party fought against the other, as fiercely as dogs fight. But when Aufidius would take Marcius's side in the fight, Marcius changed his side, so that he may fight against only Aufidius. Marcius adds that Aufidius is a brave fighter and he (Marcius) feels proud of crossing swords with him.

Line 239. *Attend upon*—accompany as his second in command or sub-ordinate.

Line 241. *I am constant*—I am true to my promise.

Line 242. *Tullus*—*i. e.* Tullus Aufidius.

Line 243. *Stiff*—stiff with age. *Stand'st out ?*—do you stand aloof from this contest ?

Art thou stiff ? Stand'st out ?—'do you absent from the

campaign owing to stiffness from age'.

Line 244. *I'll lean upon one crutch and fight with t'other*—though I am stiff with age, and have to go on crutches, I will go and take part in the campaign.

Line 245. *Ere stay behind this business*—before I absent myself from the contest and do not participate in it.

True-bred—nobly bred.

Line 246. *Your company*—give us your company ; accompany us.

Line 247. *Attend us*—are waiting for us.

Line 249. *Right worthy you priority*—you are most worthy to go first ; you fully deserve the first place.

(*Worthy*=worthy of. *Priority* =first place).

Line 250. *Hence*—go away from here. *Be gone*—go away.

Nay, let them follow—no, let them follow us (This is said sarcastically.)

Line 251. *These rats*—these citizens (This is also said sarcastically).

Thither—to that place (*i. e.* to the front).

Line 252. *Gnaw*—bite ; eat. *Garners*—granaries ; grain stores. *Worshipful*—respectable (This is said ironically).

Mutiners—mutineers ; rebels.

Line. 253. *Valour*—bravery. *Puts well forth*—gives promise of good fruit, like buds on a tree (*Put forth*=buds or shoots out).

Your valour puts well forth—Marcius means that the citizens have shown them-selves to be very brave in resisting their rulers. This fact is a good sign of how brave they will prove against the enemy.

Note. Marcius makes this remark in an ironical manner. He means just the opposite of what he says.

Stage direction. *Steal away*—slink away ; go away, feeling guilty.

Line 255. *He has no equal*—Marcius has no equal in pride.

Line 257. *Mark'd you his lip and eyes*—did you notice

how he curled his lips and cast a scornful look.

Nay, but his taunts—no, but his taunting remarks were even more scornful than his lip and eye.

Line 258. *Being mov'd*—if he is provoked.

He will not spare to gird the gods—he will not refrain from scoffing (mocking) the gods.

Line 259. *Be-mock*—mock at ; scoff at. *Be-mock the modest moon*—he will mock at Diana, the goddess of purity.

Line 260. *The present wars devour him*—may the war now at hand swallow him up.

Note. This is a curse pronounced by Brutus. He wishes that Marcius should be killed in the war between Rome and the Volscians.

Line 261. *To be*—by being ; through.

Lines 260—261. *He is grown too proud to be so valiant*—Marcius has become extremely proud because he is conscious of his valour (heroism).

Line 262. *Tickled with*—excited by. *Good success*—good fortune. *Disdains*—holds in contempt.

Line 263. *Treads*—walks.

Lines 261—262. *Such a nature, tickled with good success ......at noon*—such a proud man, when he is flattered by success, refuses to own acquaintance with his own shadow.

Lines 264—265. *His insolence can brook to be commanded under Cominius*—Marcius who is so arrogant can put up with the idea of being a sub-ordinate of Cominius. (*Brook*=endure ; put up with. *Commanded*=put in command of a force).

At the which—at which.

Line 266. *In whom*—*i. e.* fame (fame is personified here). *In whom already he's well grac'd*—Fame, in whose good graces (books) he already is.

Lines 266—267. *Cannot be held nor more attain'd than......first*—cannot be more confidently held, nor acquired in fuller measure, than by one who acts as subordinate to the chief commander.

Miscarries—goes wrong.

Lines 269. *Shall be*—is bound to be.

Lines 269—270. *Though he perform to the utmost of a man*—though he may have done all that any man could do.

Giddy censure—fickle opinion (*i. e.* people whose opinions are not well considered)

Censure—opinion.

Line 271. *Of Marcius—i. e.* regarding Marcius.

Line 272. *Had borne the business*—had been in charge of the war.

If things go well—if the outcome of fighting is favourable to Rome.

Line 273. *Sticks on*—is set on.

Lines 274. *De-merits*—merits.

Lines 273—274. *Opinion that so sticks.. ...Cominius*—public opinion that is so fastened on Marcius, will rob Cominius of the praise he deserves.

Line 275. *Are to Marcius*—are certain to belong to Marcius.

Line 276. *His faults—i. e.* the faults of Cominius.

Line 276—277. *And all his faults to Marcius shall be honours*—the faults of Cominius will bring Marcius into greater honour and prominence.

Line 278. *In aught he merit not*—though in reality Marcius should not do anything to deserve this honour.

Let's hence—let us go away from here.

Line 279. *How the dispatch is made*—how the business of sending forth the army is managed.

Fashion—manner.

Line 280. *More than his singularity*—besides his well-known peculiarity of character (*singularity*=individual peculiarities of character).

Line 281. *He goes upon this present action*—he takes the field.

Let's along—let us go along to-gether.

————

Act I, Scene II

I. Summary of the Scene :

This scene is laid at Corioli. The Volscian senators make their counter-plans. Their general, Tullus Aufidius informs them that Rome has anticipated their plans and that he received a letter from Rome four days back, suggesting that Cominius, Marcius and Lartius were leading the Roman army against the Volscians.

The second Senator proposes that Aufidius should meet the Roman army in the battle-field, while the senators will defend the city of Corioli. He adds that Aufidius should come to their rescue if the Roman army lays a siege to the city.

Aufidius declares that if he happens to encounter (meet) Marcius in battle, both of them will continue to strike till one of them is completely dis-abled.

All the senators pray for the success of Aufidius. He then bids them farewell and departs for the battle-field.

II: Main Events in the Scene :

1. Aufidius and Volscian senators discuss their war-plans in the Senate-house, at Corioli.
2. Aufidius tells the senators that Cominius, Marcius and Lartius are marching against the Volscians.
3. The Second Senator suggests that Aufidius will encounter the Roman army in the battle-field, while the senators will guard the city of Corioli.
4. Aufidius refers to his and Coriolanus' determination to fight to the end if they encounter each other in battle.

III. Dramatic Importance of the Scene :

This scene like Act I, Scene I, forms a part of the Exposition (Introduction ; preface) of the play. Its main purpose, is to introduce Aufidius to us, who plays an important part in the life of Marcius and is responsible for the death of the latter in the end.

The scene requires us to suppose that some time has passed since Rome raised an army against the Volscians and that Aufidius and the Volscian Senators have got wind of the Roman war-plans.

The scene refers to the long-standing enmity and rivalry between Marcius and Aufidius. The latter, for example, informs the Senators :

If we and Caius Marcius chance to meet,
'Tis sworn between us we shall ever strike
Till one can do no more.

It is a short scene which admirably succeeds in introducing Aufidius, the general of the Volsces to the audience.

According to Harley Granville-Barker, "The scene is but forty lines long, yet we learn that much intelligence (information) passes between Rome and the Volsces. Rome, civilly dis-tracted (dis-turbed) has her fifth column."

IV. Shakespeare's debt to Plutarch :—

This scene does not owe much to Plutarch, unless it were the general impression of the rivalry between Marcius and Aufidius.

It is to be noted that Aufidius is not mentioned by Plutarch till after the capture of Corioli and after Coriolanus' banishment from Rome.

Line 2. *They of Rome*—the Romans. *Are enter'd in*—are acquainted with; are initiated into; have the secret of (*In*=into)

Our counsels—our plans.

Line 3. *And know how we proceed*—and know what arrangements we are making.

Is it not yours ?—is it not your opinion too ?

Line 4. *What-ever have been thought*—what plans have we ever had in mind.

(*What*=what things)

Line 5. *That could be brought to bodily act*—that could be acted upon ; that could be carried out.

Lines 4—5. *Ere Rome had circumvention*—ere Rome had the means of over-throwing our plans. (*Circumvention*—means of circumvention ; power to circumvent them).

Lines 4—6. *What-ever have been thought on in this state.........Rome had circumvention*—what plans have we ever had in mind and were able to carry them out, without Rome over-throwing them.

(Aufidius means that when-ever the Volscians think of plans against Rome, and wish to carry them out, the Romans come to know of them and out-wit the Volscians).

Line 6. *'Tis not four days gone*—it is not four days ago.

Line 7. *I heard thence*—I had news from Rome.

Line 9. *They have press'd a power*—the Romans have enrolled an army.

(*Power*=army ; force ; troops)

Line 10. *Whether for east or west*—whether the troops are to be sent to the east or the west.

The dearth is great—there is a terrible famine in Rome (*Dearth*=scarcity of corn).

Line 11. *Mutinous*—re-bellious.

Line 13. *Of Rome*—by the common people of Rome. (*Of*=by).

Than of you—than by you.

Line 14. *Valiant*—brave ; heroic.

Line 15. *Preparation*—army prepared for immediate action.

Line 16. *Whither 'tis bent*—to which-ever destination it is inclined.

Line 18. *Made doubt*—doubted.

Line 19. *To answer us*—to meet us in the battle.

Line 20. *Great pretences*—important designs. *Veil'd*—hidden.

Line 21. *Needs*—of necessity. *Which in the hatching*—while they are being brought to the birth ; while carrying them out.

Line 22. *Appear'd*—became manifest ; were apparent.

Line 23. *We shall be shorten'd in our aims*—we shall be compelled to fall short of our intention.

Line 24. *To take in*—to capture. *Ere almost*—almost before.

Line 25. *We were afoot*—we were in motion (*Afoot*=on foot).

Line 26. *Take your commission*—Exercise your commission which authorises you to command the troops.

Hie you—hasten. *Bands*—troops.

Line 27. *Let us alone*—leave us alone.

Line 28. *If they set down before's*—if they besiege us. *For the remove*—in order to remove them, that is, to raise the siege.

Line 30. *They've not prepared for us*—that this war preparation of the Romans is not intended against us.

Line 31. *From certainties*—from certain or sure information.

Line 32. *Parcels*—parts ; portions. *Power*—army. *Are forth*—are set forth.

Line 33. *And only hitherward*—and are sent against this city.

Line 34. *Chance to meet*—happen to meet.

Line 35. *We shall ever strike*—we will go on striking blows ; we shall keep on striking, that is, fighting.

Line 36. *Till one can do no more*—till one of us is completely dis-abled.

Line 37. *Your honours*—your honourable selves.

———

Act I, Scene III

I. Summary of the Scene :

The scene is a room in Marcius' house. Volumnia (Coriolanus' mother) and Virgilia (Coriolanus' wife) are sitting on two low stools and are stitching. Virgilia is sad because her husband has gone to the war. Volumnia tells her to cheer up. She further says that when her only son Marcius was a handsome youth, she was pleased to let him seek danger where he was likely to find fame. She sent him to a cruel war. When he returned home, his forehead was decorated with a wreath (garland) of oak-leaves, as he had distinguished himself in the war.

Just then a Gentlewoman announces that Lady Valeria has come to see them. Virgilia seeks the permission of her mother-in-law to retire. Volumnia asks her to sit there. The former, then, suggests that she can visualize her son" overpowering Aufidius, the general of the Volscians, and striking

terror into the heart of the Volscian soldiers. She seems to hear, in her imagination, her son cursing the cowardly Roman soldiers who exhibit (show) signs of fear. Further, she can visualize that her son's forehead is covered with drops of blood. Virgilia is horrified at the mention of blood ; but Volumnia says that it becomes a soldier more than gilding his monument.

Lady Valeria enters and greets Volumnia and Valeria. Valeria suggests that Volumnia and her duaghter-in-law are stay-at-homes. She admires the pattern which Virgilia is stitching, and then enquires about the latter's little son. Volumnia expresses the wish that Virgilia's son should take interest in military affairs rather than in his studies. Valeria narrates an incident, that sheds light on the war-like temper of Virgilia's son. The latter had chased and caught a golden butterfly and then torn it to pieces. Virgilia, commenting on this incident, refers to her son as a roguish lad.

Valeria asks the two ladies to give up stitching and accompany her. Virgilia refuses to leave her house. She says that she will not cross the threshold till her husband returns from the war. Volumnia dis-approves of Virgilia's resolve and asks her to accompany Valeria and pay a visit to a lady who lies in child-birth. Virgilia wishes to be excused. Valeria suggests humorously that Virgilia wishes to be as faithful to her husband, as Penelope was to Ulysses. She once again invites Virgilia to accompany her. The latter still refuses to leave her house.

Valeria promises to tell Virgilia news concerning the latter's husband, in case she accompanies her. Virgilia doubts if any news has come so far. Valeria informs her, that according to a senator, Marcius and Titus Lartius, have laid siege to Corioli, and Cominius is meeting the Volscian army in the battle-field. The Roman army feels confident of defeating the Volscians and to end the war soon.

Virgilia once again refuses to go out. Volumnia suggests that Virgilia should be allowed to stay at home, because, in her present state of mind, she will spoil their mirth. Valeria agrees with Volumnia, and bids farewell to Virgilia.

II. Main events in the Scene :

1. Volumnia and Virgilia are sitting on two low stools and stitching.

2. Virgilia is sad because her husband has gone to the war ; Volumnia is happy that her son will distinguish himself in battle.
3. Volumnia tells her daughter-in-law, how the former made her only son, Marcius, seek military glory, when he was a handsome youth.
4. Lady Valeria pays a visit to the two ladies.
5. Valeria tells an incident concerning Virgilia's son. According to it, he had torn a butterfly to pieces.
6. Valeria invites the two ladies to give up stitching and accompany her to see a Roman lady who lies in child-birth.
7. Virgilia says that she will not leave her house, till her husband returns from the wars.
8. Valeria gives her war-news. She informs Virgilia that her husband and Lartius have besieged Corioli and that Cominius will meet the Volscian army in the battle-field. She adds that the Roman army is confident of winning a victory.
9. Virigilia still refuses to accompany Valeria.
10. Volumnia and Valeria go out together leaving Virgilia.

III. Dramatic significance of the Scene :

This scene completes the Exposition (introductory section of the play) by introducing the important remaining characters —Volumnia and Virigilia—who play a memorable part in the fortunes of Coriolanus. It also refers, in passing, to Coriolanus' son, who re-appears in the reconciliation scene (Act V, Scene III).

This scene presents three female characters who present a striking contrast to one another. Volumnia is strong-willed like her son Marcius ; she is the grand Roman matron ; Virgilia is gentle and soft-hearted but with a will of her own ; Valeria is merry and witty.

This scene indicates how Volumnia's disposition has influenced, from the very beginning, her son's bent of mind, and how he has inherited from her not only his choler (anger) but also his contempt for the common people. Thus Volumnia, imagines

that while cursing his troops, he must be exclaiming to them :

Come on, you cowards ! you were got in fear
Though you were born in Rome.

It is to be noted that Volumnia employs the very tone of Marcius, in reporting him.

Virgilia is a foil (contrast) to her choleric (angry) and strong-willed mother-in-law. According to John Palmer, "Volumnia thinks first of her son's glory ; Virgilia thinks first of her husband's peril...Again, Virgilia has none of Volumnia's delight in butchery (blood-shed). She exclaims : His bloody brow ! O Jupiter, no blood !"

Throughout this scene Volumnia is impatient and dictatorial, while Virgilia is gracious and softly stubborn. Volumnia seems to be gifted with manly qualities, whereas Virgilia is a woman, every inch.

This scene, which presents a family picture, provides a delightful relief to the audience, coming as it does, after the first two scenes, marked by tumult and tension. It furthers the plot, towards its end, where Valeria refers to the besieging of Corioli and the confidence of the Roman army to win a victory.

Commenting on this scene Harley Granville-Barker observes,"The scene gives us Volumnia's Spartan temper, harsh at its kindliest, her son's tones—his very words echoing through hers ; Virgilia's gentler spirit, her tremulous courage, her soft stubborn-ness ; Valeria, witty and merry, excited with her news of the war. The opening prose is austere ; it paints Volumnia. For the picturing of Marcius in the field comes coloured and moving verse. Valeria's chatter about the child brings prose again, easy and decorative, in which medium the scene ends. Valeria's news (towards the end of the scene) advances us several steps in the war."

IV. Shakespeare's debt to North's Plutarch :—

This scene is practically Shakespeare's creation. He has however, taken the names of the three ladies from Plutarch. A few of the other details occurring in Plutarch & utilised by Shakespeare are :

(*a*) Volumnia's pride in her son.

(*b*) Marcius' winning the garland of oaken leaves in the battle of Lake Regillus.

(*c*) Marcius' having two sons (Shakespeare has reduced the number two to one).

Note. It is to be remembered that Shakespeare has created Volumnia from mere hints in Plutarch: "the only thing that made him love honour was the joy he saw his mother did take of him. For he thought nothing made him so happy and honourable, as that his mother might hear everybody praise and commend him, that she might always see him return with a crown upon his head."

Line 1. *I pray you*—I request you.

Line 2. *Comfortable sort*—cheerful manner.

Note. Virgilia is obviously sad because her husband has departed for the war.

Lines 2—3. *If my son were my husband—i.e.* if I were in your place.

Line 3. *Absence—i.e.* absence from home.

Line 4. *Embracements—i.e.* embraces.

Line 5. *He would show*—he desired to show.

Lines 6—7. *Youth with Comeliness*—youthfulness joined with handsomeness (*i.e.* when he was youthful as well as handsome).

Line 7. *Plucked all gaze his way*—attracted all eyes towards him (*His way*—in his direction.)

Lines 7—9. *When for a day of king's entreaties a mother should not sell him an hour from his beholding*—when a mother would not like to part with him even for a day, although kings entreated her for one hour to do so.

(*Should not sell*—would not part with)

(*Be-holding*—sight)

Line 10. *Such a person*—such a handsome youth.

Lines 10—12. *That it was no better than picture-like......not stir*—that such handsomeness was as useless as a picture hanging on the wall, unless it was made animate (living) by the pursuit of fame.

(*Renown*—desire for renown or fame)

Lines 12—13. *Let him*—allow him. *Like*—likely. *A cruel war*—Volumnia refers to the battle of Lake Regillus (498 B.C.) in which her son saved the life of a Roman citizen & was awarded a garland of oak leaves for this service.

Line 14. *Oak*—a garland of oak leaves.

Note. Oak refers to a wreath (garland) of oak-leaves that was awarded to a Roman, who saved the life of a citizen in a battle.

Marcius won this award at the age of sixteen in a cruel war against the despot, Tarquin.

The award which was called *Corona Civica* (citizen's crown) enabled the winner to sit next the senators in public gatherings.

Line 15. *I sprang not more in joy*—I did not experience greater joy.

Lines 15—16. *At first hearing he was a man-child*—when I heard first that he was a male child (*i.e.* a boy).

Line 17. *He had proved himself a man*—he had given evidence of being manly (brave).

Lines 18—19. *But had he died in the business, madam; how then*—but supposing he had died while saving the life of a citizen in the battle, how would have you felt in that case.

Line 20. *Good report*—fame.

Line 20—21. *Should have been my son*—would have been to me in place of a son.

Issue—children.

Line 21. *I therein would have found issue*—I would have regarded his fame as my children, who would carry on the family.

Line 22. *Profess*—declare ; confess.

Lines 22—24. *Each in my love alike...my good Marcius*—each of the dozen sons equally dear with Marcius, your husband and my dear son.

Line 24. *I had rather had*—I would rather have had.

Line 25. *Then one Voluptuously surfeit out of action*—than that one of them should indulge excessively in pleasure at his ease ; than that one of them should lead a soft life of pleasure and over-indulgence.

Line 27. *Beseech you*—I beseech (request) you.

To retire myself—to retire to my own room. (*Retire*=withdraw).

Line 29. *Methinks*—it seems to me. *Hither*—coming to this side. *Your husband's drum*—the sound of your husband's drum.

Methinks I hear hither your husband's drum—it appears to me as though I hear the sound of Marcius's drum, as he causes it to be beaten, for the attack on the Volscians.

Note. She hears the sound of Marcius's drum, in imagination, and not actually.

Line 31. *As children from a bear, the Volsces shunning him*—the Volscians getting out of his way, as children would out of the way of an angry bear.

Line 33. *Come on, you cowards*—(Marcius is supposed to be addressing his soldiers *i.e* the Romans.)

Lines 33–34. *You were got in fear though you were born in Rome*—addressing his soldiers, Marcius says that though they were born in Rome, they lack Roman courage, as their fathers were cowards.

(*Got*=begotten)

Line 34. *Bloody brow*—fore-head covered with drops of blood.

Line 35. *Mail'd hand*—hand wrapped up in armour, made of links of steel.

Line 36. *Like to*—like. *Task'd*—set to task. *Mow*—reap. *Or*—either.

Line 37. *Lose his hire*—lose his wages.

Lines 36–37. *Like to a harvest man thats' task'd...lose his hire*—like a labourer hired to reap the harvest, on the condition, that either he will reap the whole harvest or receive no wages for his service.

Note. Volumnia suggests that Marcius has been employed on the condition that either he will kill all the Volscians or get no credit or honour for his labour.

Line 38. *Jupiter*—Jove, the President of gods. *No blood*—no drop of Marcius's blood shall be spilt.

Line 39. *Fool*—silly (This is said endearingly). *Becomes*—adorns.

Line 40. *Than gilt his trophy*—than gilding his tomb; than covering his monument with a plating of gold.

Hecuba—she was the wife of Priam, king of Troy.

Line 41. *Hector*—was the son of Hecuba and Priam and the great fighter of the Trojans against the Greeks, during the siege of Troy. *When she did suckle Hector*—when she fed Hector with her milk.

Line 42. *When it spit forth blood*—when Hector's forehead spat blood in the face of the Greeks, who had attacked him.

Line 43. *Grecians*—the Greek soldiers.

Contemning—scorning; in contempt.

Lines 40—43. *The breasts of Hecuba, when she did suckle Hector...at Grecian swords, contemning.*

Explanation. The breasts of Hecuba, the Queen of Troy, did not look more beautiful when she fed Hector with her milk, than the bloody fore-head of Hector, when it spat forth blood, in the face of Greek soldiers, who had attacked him, and when the blood seemed to be animated with the contempt that Hector felt for his enemies.

Line 44. *Fit*—ready.

Line 45. *Bless*—save by blessing; protect. *My lord*—my husband. *Fell*—cruel; fierce.

Line 46. *He'll*—Marcius will.

Line 47. *Tread*—walk.

Stage direction, *Usher*—door keeper.

Line 51. *Manifest house-keepers*—well-known stay-at-homes.

Line 52. *Sewing*—embroidering. *A fine spot*—a delicate pattern of embroidery.

Line 53. *In good faith*—truly speaking.

Lines 55—56. *He had rather see the swords and hear a drum, than look upon his school-master*—he should rather take interest in military weapons and band than in books.

Line 57. *O' my word*—I declare solemnly.

The father's son—a true son of his father. *Pretty*—fine.

Line 58. *O' my troth*—by my truth ; I assure you.

Lines 58—59. *I looked upon him o' Wednesday*—I watched him on Wednesday.

Has—he has.

Confirmed—determined ; resolute.

Line 60. *Countenance*—face.

Gilded butterfly—butterfly having bright colours.

Line 61. *He let it go again*—he allowed the butterfly to fly away again.

Line 62. *And after it again*—and he ran after the butterfly again.

Lines 62—63. *And over and over he comes, and up again*—and he falls head over heels but gets up again.

Catched it again—caught it again.

Or whether—*i.e.* whether.

(*Whether*=whether it was that)

Line 64. *Enraged him*—made him angry.

How 't was—whatever the reason was.

Line 65. *I warrant*—I can tell you confidently. *He mammocked it*—he tore the butterfly to pieces.

Line 66. *On's*—of his.

One on's father's moods—just like his father in one of his fits of anger.

Line 67. *La*—an exclamation expressing emphasis.

Line 68. *A crack*—a rogue ; a lively boy.

Note. "Crack" is a little contemptuous term. Its use by Virgilia implies that she does not approve of her son's fighting spirit.

Line 69. *Lay aside*—leave. *Your stitchery*—your stitching.

Lines 69—70. *I must have you play the idle huswife with me this after-noon*—I must make you do nothing this afternoon and idle away your time in my company.

(*Huswife*=house-wife)

Line 71. *I will not out of doors*—I will not go out of doors.

Line 73. *She shall*—she shall go out of doors.

Line 74. *By your patience*—if you excuse me ; by your leave.

Lines 74—75. *I'll not over the threshold*—I will not cross the threshold.

My lord—my husband. *Return*—may or should return.

Line 76. *Fie*—shame !

You confine yourself most un-reasonably—you are very un-reasonable in confining yourself to the four walls of your home.

Line 77. *Go visit*—go to visit. *The good lady that lies in*—the good lady who has just had a child born to her (*Lies in* =lies in child-bed).

Line 81. *I want love*—I lack love.

Line 82. *Penelope*—she was the wife of Odysseus or Ulysses. During her husband's long absence from Ithaca, a rocky island over which he ruled, many suitors (lovers) sought her hand. She promised to choose one of them, when she had finished a web, that she was weaving. Every night she un-did the work she had done during the day-time. In this way, the web was never finished.

Line 83. *Ulysses*—the husband of Penelope. He ruled over Ithaca, a rocky island off Western Greece.

Line 84. *Ithaca*—an island off Western Greece, over which Ulysses ruled.

Moths—lovers, who were attracted by the yarn (web) of Penelope, just as moths are attracted by the light of a candle.

Lines 82—84. *You would be another Penelope......full of moths.*

Explanation. Valeria means that Virgilia wishes to be as faithful to her husband as Penelope was to her husband, Ulysses, the king of Ithaca. Valeria adds humorously that Penelope's device to put off her suitors by un-weaving the web at night, that she had woven during the day, only attracted more and more suitors. They were attracted by her web just as moths are attracted by the candle-light ; and they were destroyed by Ulysses, on his return to Ithaca, just as moths

are consumed by the flame of the candle. Thus the attraction was fatal.

I would—I could wish.

Line 85. *Cambric*—a kind of fine white linen.

Were sensible—was sensitive ; was capable of feeling pain.

Line 86. *Leave pricking it for pity*—stop pricking your cambric (linen) with a needle, out of pity.

Lines 84—86. *I would your cambric.......for pity*—I could wish that the fine white linen which you are stitching, were capable of feeling pain, so that you would stop pricking it with a needle, out of mere pity.

Line 87. *I will not forth*—I will not go out of doors.

Line 92. *Verily*—truly. *Jest*—joke.

Line 95. *In earnest*—seriously.

Line 98. *Roman force*—Roman army.

Line 99. *Are set down*—have encamped in order to besiege.

Lines 99—100. *They nothing doubt*—they do not doubt.

Pre-vailing—over-coming.

To make it brief wars—to end the war soon. (*Make it*= make).

Line 103. *Give me excuse*—pardon me ; excuse me.

Line 105. *Let her alone*—leave her alone.

As she is now—in her present mood.

But—only.

Line 106. *Disease our better mirth*—spoil our mirth, which would be better without her. (*Disease*=spoil ; disturb *Mirth*—enjoyment).

Line 107. *In troth*—truly.

Line 109. *Solemness*—sad-ness.

Turn thy solemness out o'door—banish your sad-ness.

Line 110. *At a word*—in a word ; in short.

I must not—I must not go alon with you.

———

Act I, Scene IV

I. Summary of the Scene :

Marcius and Lartius have be-sieged Corioli. A messenger approaches them. Marcius bets his horse that Cominius' army and the Volscians have encountered each other in battle. Laritus accepts the bet. The messenger informs them that Cominius' army and the Volscians have not joined battle so far. Marcius loses the bet. The messenger adds that Cominius' army is engaging the enemy at a distance of a mile and a half.

A trumpet call is sounded. Two Volscian Senators with others appear on the wall. They inform Marcius that Aufidius is not in the city and that the latter does not fear Marcius. The army of the Volsces enters. Marcius orders his soldiers to advance and threatens to punish those who would flee from the battle-field.

The Romans are beaten back to their trenches. Marcius re-enters, cursing violently his Roman soldiers. He calls them cowards and warns them to mend their ways, or run the risk of being killed by him.

When the battle is resumed, the Volscian soldiers flee and Marcius follows them to the gates. He then enters the gates, asking his soldiers to follow him. None of them, however, enters the city.

Lartius re-appears on the scene and is informed that Marcius is shut in the city. Lartius praises the courage and valour of Marcius.

After sometime, Marcius re-enters bleeding, assaulted by the enemy.

Lartius asks his soldiers to follow the example of Marcius. They fight and all enter the city.

II. Dramatic significance of the Scene :

This is the first of many battle scenes. Marcius is seen, here, to be in his element. He likes nothing better than fighting and takes a sheer delight in the exercise of his profession.

Shakespeare makes us see Marcius, the fighting hero, fight valiantly in this scene. Undaunted by the Volscian army, he enters the city of Corioli, single-handed, and succeeds in inflicting a crushing defeat on the Volscian senators.

This scene brings out Marcius' super-human courage as well as his un-controllable anger. When he finds his soldiers fleeing before the Volscians, he loses his temper and starts cursing them violently. He heaps curses on them, saying :

All the contagion of the south light on you,
You shames of Rome ! You herd of—Boils and plagues
Plaster you o'er, that you may be abhorr'd
Further than seen, and one infect another
Against the wind a mile !

He refers to them as "souls of geese, that bear the shapes of men".

He warns them to mend their ways or to run the risk of being killed by him.

Marcius emerges in this scene as a fearless and courageous fighter, deserving fully the tribute of Lartius as :

A soldier
Even to Cato's wish, not fierce and terrible
Only in strokes.

This scene enlists our sympathy for Marcius and makes us feel that there was ample justification for the contempt in which he held the common people.

This is, primarily, a scene of action. We are made to see Marcius at his best. The dramatic way in which he enters the city, all alone, and his equally dramatic re-appearance, are two of the most successful stage-effects created by Shakespeare.

III. Shakespeare's debt to North's Plutarch :

This scene is almost entirely based on North's Plutarch. In a few cases Shakespeare makes use of North's actual words. For example :

(*a*) "For he (Marcius) was even such another, as Cato would have a soldier and a captain to be, not only terrible, and fierce to lay about him, but to make the enemy afraid with the sound of his voice and the grim-ness of his countenance."

(Compare Shakespeare :

Thou wast a soldier
Even to Cato's wish, not fierce and terrible
Only in strokes ; but, with thy grim looks and
The thunder-like percussion of thy sounds,

Thou mad'st thine enemies shake, as if the world
Were feverous and did tremble.)

(*b*) "He did encourage his fellows with words and deeds, crying out to them, that fortune had opened the gates of the city, more for the followers than the fliers."

Compare Shakespeare :
So, now the gates are ope ; now prove good seconds :
'Tis for the followers Fortune widens them
Not for the fliers : mark me, and do the like.

Note. Shakespeare's main departure from North's Plutarch is that the former makes Marcius enter Corioli alone, whereas, according to Plutarch, Marcius was accompanied by "very few men".

Stage Direction. *Colours*—flags of regiments.

Line 1. *Yonder*—situated over there, in the direction towards which I am looking or pointing ; within view but distant.

A wager they have met—let me lay you a bet that the rival armies have come to an engagement. (*Wager*=bet.)

Line 2. *My horse to yours, no*—I will stake my horse against yours that the rival armies have not come to an engagement.

'Tis done—agreed ; I accept the wager.

Line 3. *Our general—i. e.* Cominius. *Met the enemy*—engaged the Volscians in an encounter.

Line 4. *Have not spoke as yet*—have not encountered so far.

Line 5. *So the good horse is mine*- this means that you have lost your wager.

Buy him—i. e. buy the horse.

Line 6. *Nor sell nor give him*—neither sell nor give the horse.

Lend you him I will—I will lend the horse to you.

Line 7. *For half a hundred years*—for as long as you like.

Summon the town—(This is addressed to a trumpeter).

Line 8. *Within this mile and half*—about a mile and a half away.

Line 9. *'larum*—alarum ; call to arms.

Note : "Alarum" is a shortened form of alarm, which is from Italian *all 'arme* meaning "to your arms"

Line 10. *Mars*—Roman God of war. *Prithee*—request you ; pray to you.

Make us quick in work—enable us to finish off our work of taking the town quickly.

Line 11. *That*—so that. *Smoking swords*—swords reeking with the blood of the enemy. *From hence*—from this place.

Line 12. *Fielded friends*—friends who are in the battle-field.

Blow thy blast—*i.e.* blow your trumpet (This is addressed to the trumpeter).

Stage Direction. *A parley*—a trumpet-call. (*Parley*—conference with an enemy in war).

Lines 14—15. *Nor a man that fears you less than he, that's lesser than a little*—"nor is there any man who fears you less than he does, and he fears you less than little,. that is, not at all."

Note I : The Senator means that Aufidius does not fear Marcius and that the men of Corioli are no more afraid of Marcius than Aufidius is.

Note II : According to some critics "fears you less than he" should be properly "fears you more than he"

Lesser than a little—next to nothing ; not at all.

Hark—listen.

Line 16. *Are bringing forth our youth*—*i. e.* our youths are following the drums.

Line 17. *Rather than they*—rather than that they.

Shall pound us up—shall shut us in, as in an enclosure, (in which wandering cattle were shut).

(*Pound*—an enclosure in which stray cattle were shut).

Line 18. *Pinn'd*—fastened as with pegs.

Rushes—bars that can be broken in a movement.

Stage Direction. *Afar off*—*i. e.* in Corioli.

Line 20. *List*—mark. *What Work he makes*—*i. e.* how he destroys the Roman army.

Line 21. *Cloven—i. e.* the army which he cuts in two.

They are at it—they are engaged in fierce fighting.

Line 22. *Their noise be our instruction*—let the fury, with which they are fighting, teach us to fight like them.

(*Instruction*—signal for our attack.)

Line 23. *Issue forth*—come forth from.

Line 25. *With hearts more proof than shields*—hearts more tested, and so proved to be more enduring than shields.

(*Proof*=which has been tested).

Note: Weapons are "proved" or tested before they are sold.

Line 26. *Dis-dain*—scorn ; regard with contempt.

Much beyond our thought—much more than we expected.

Line 27. *Which—i. e.* their regarding us with contempt. *Wrath*—anger.

Line 28. *He that*—the Roman soldier who. *I'll take him for a Volsce*—I will regard him as though he were a Volscian and not a Roman.

Line 29. *And he shall feel mine edge—i. e.* he will be killed by my sword.

(*Edge*—the edge of my sword)

Stage Direction. *Are beat*—are beaten.

Line 30. *Contagian*—disease carried by contact or touching. *The South*—the south wind. *Light*—alight.

All the Contagion of the South light on you—may all the contagious diseases, that the south wind brings with it, alight on you.

Note : The south wind was supposed to be bringing disease with it.

Line 31. *You shames of Rome*—you, who are a dis-grace to Rome.

You herd of—(Marcius does not complete the phrase. He breaks off without adding any adjective after 'of' ; Perhaps he wanted to say ; you herd of cowards or you herd of fools.)

Boils and plagues—boils and plague-sores.

Line 32. *Plaster you o'er*—cover your body from head to foot.

That—so that. *Ahborr'd*—hated ; loathed.

Line 33. *Further than seen*—when you are too far off to be seen.

And one infect another—you may give one another the infection or disease.

Line 34. *Against the wind a mile*—even though you may be a mile apart and a strong wind blowing.

Lines 31—34. *Boils and plagues plaster you o'er...against the wind a mile*—may your bodies be covered, from head to foot, with boils and plague-sores, so that you will be detested when you are too far to be seen. And may you give one another the infection or disease even though you may be a mile apart, and with strong wind blowing.

Note. The idea is that the infection is so strong that even a strong wind will not be able to blow it away.

You souls of geese—you cowards.

Line 35. *That bear the shapes of men*—*i. e.* that are not men but only have the outward forms of men.

Line 36. *Apes*—monkeys. *Would beat*—would defeat.

Pluto—Roman god of the under-world.

Line 37. *All hurt behind*—*i. e.* with wounds on your backs.

Backs red—backs bloody with wounds.

Faces pale—faces gone pale with fear.

Line 38. *With flight*—with the fear of fleeing from the battle-field. *Agued fear*—fear that makes you tremble as ague does.

(*Ague*—disease in which the patient suffers from shivering (trembling) fits).

Mend--mend your ways ; recover courage ; pull yourselves to-gether.

Charge home—Charge right into the midst of the enemy.

Line 39. *Or*—otherwise. *By the fires of heaven*—*i. e.* I swear by the sun and the stars.

(*Fires of heavent*=he sun and the stars).

Foe—enemy *i. e.* the Volscians.

Line 40. *Make my wars on you—i. e.* attack you ; I will attack you (*i. e.* the Roman soldiers).

Look to 't—take care to obey my words.

Line 41. *We'll beat them to their wives*—we will defeat them so that they are compelled to seek refuge with their wives.

Line 42. *As they us to our trenches followed*—as they pursued us to our trenches.

Line 43. *Ope*—open. *Now prove good seconds*—now back me up well.

(*Seconds*=supporters).

Line 44. *Followers*—pursuers *i. e.* the Romans. *Widens them*—opens the gates as wide.

Line 45. *The fliers*—the runaways *i. e.* the Volscians.

Do the like—i. e. follow suit (enter the gates).

Line 46. *Foolhardiness*—an act that is foolishly venturesome.

Not I—I will not follow suit.

Line 47. *To the pot*—to destruction ; done for ; ruined (Marcius has gone to certain destruction).

Note :—"Pot" may mean the "cooking pot" or "melting-pot" into which metal is cast. We have a colloquial expression : *go to pot,* which means "to be ruined".

I warrant him—I can assure him (of his certain destruction).

Line 48. *Slain*—killed. *Doubtless*—surely ; without doubt.

Line 49. *Fliers*—runaways i.e. the Volscians.

At the very heels—i.e. very closely.

Line 50. *Who*—and they i.e. the Volscians.

Upon the sudden—all of a sudden ; suddenly.

Line 51. *Clapp'd-to*—shut together with a jerk and a crash.

Line 52. *To answer all the city*—to face the entire city.

Line 53. *Who, sensibly, out-dares his senseless sword, and when it bows, stands up*—who, though sensitive to pain, is bolder than his sword, which is incapable of feeling (pain), and

who stands firm, while his sword may be bent.

(*Out-dares* = surpasses in daring)

Line 54. *Thou art left*—you are deserted.

Line 55. *Carbuncle*—gem.

Note :—"Carbuncle" originally meant a glowing coal ; then a gem, and then a boil which, because of its redness, looks like a live coal.

Entire—Whole ; complete and perfect.

Line 56. *Were not so rich a jewel*—would not be so precious a jewel.

Lines 55-56. *A carbuncle entire......so rich a jewel*—even a complete and perfect ruby, as big in size as you are, would not be so precious as you.

Line 57. *Even to Cato's wish*—Just such as Cato would have desired.

(*To*=up to)

Cato—a noble Roman who was regarded as the type of firmness and Roman courage.

Note :—Marcius lived long before Cato's time (234-149 B.C.). This is, therefore, an example of an anachronism.

Line 58. *Grim*—harsh ; stern.

Line 59. *The thunder-like percussion of thy sounds*—the thunderous sounds made by your sword as it strikes the armour of your enemies.

Line 60. *Thou mad'st thine enemies shake*—you made your enemies tremble.

Line 61. *Feverous*—feverish (as if suffering from ague).

Line 62. *Let's fetch him off*—let us rescue him.

Make remain—i.e. remain.

Make remain alike—remain in the same perils (dangerous) position with him.

Act I, Scene V

I. Summary of the Scene.

After the fall of the city of Corioli, the Roman soldiers indulge in loot and plunder. Marcius and Lartius appear on the

scene. Marcius expresses his contempt for the greedy Roman soldiers, who are looting worthless things.

He listens to the trumpet-call from the battle-field and decides to meet Aufidius there. He asks Lartius to take some soldiers with him in order to secure the city of Corioli.

Accompanied by some brave soldiers, Marcius prepares to leave for the battle-field, to help Cominius. Lartius suggests that as Marcius is bleeding, the latter should not risk a second course of fighting. Marcius tells him that the former does not bother about the blood that he is dropping. Lartius prays that the goddess of Fortune should be-friend Marcius. The latter departs for the battle-field.

Lartius asks the trumpeter to sound his trumpet in the market-place and to call there all the officers of the town, where they will know the intentions of the victorious Romans.

II. Main events in the Scene.

1. Marcius' contempt for the common Roman soldiers who indulge in loot and plunder at Corioli.
2. His asking Lartius to guard the city and his decision to go to the battle-field.
3. Lartius' asking the trumpeter to summon all the officers of the city to the market-place.

III. Dramatic significance of the Scene.

This scene reveals Marcius as a soldier of inde fatigable courage and energy. It also shows that he is free from greed and has nothing but contempt for the common Roman soldiers, who are tempted by worthless objects, such as cushions, spoons, of lead, and doublets. Referring to them he remarks :

These base slaves,
Ere yet the fight be done, pack up : down with them,

This scene emphasizes once again the rivalry between Marcius and Aufidius. Marcius refers twice to his rival.

There is the man of my soul's hate, Aufidius

Again.

To Aufidius thus
I will appear and fight.

Marcius' indifference to his wounds is hinted at in the following two lines:

The blood I drop is rather physical
Than dangerous to me.

This is a brief scene, the main object of which is to idealize the character of Marcius.

IV. Shakespeare's debt to North's Plutarch.

This scene is mainly based on Plutarch. Shakespeare has taken the incident concerning the spoils of war from Plutarch. He has, similarly, made use of the detail regarding Marcius' departure to help Cominius.

Stage Direction. *Spoils*—plunder taken from enemy in war.

Line 1. *This*—i.e. this article

Line 3. *Murrain*—plague (originally cattle plague).

A murrain On't—Curse it ; a plague on it.

Took this—regarded it as ; treated it as.

Stage Direction. *With a trumpet*—with a trumpeter.

Line 4. *Movers*—active fellows (moving quickly about as they search for plunder).

Note. Marcius points out Roman soldiers who are moving about quickly and looking for spoils.

That do prize their hours—that regard their time as well-spent.

(*Prize*=value).

Line 5. *Crack'd*—broken. *Drachma*—a Greek coin worth about a shilling.

A crack'd drachma—a drachma that is broken and is thus of no use.

Cushions—mass of soft material stuffed into cloth or silk covering, for sitting, kneeling or reclining on.

Leaden—made of lead.

Line 6. *Irons of a doit*—pieces of iron worth a doit.

(*Doit*=a small Dutch coin worth about half a farthing)

Doublets—jackets ; close fitting jackets worn by men in the time of Shakespeare.

Hangmen—the public executioners.

Lines 6-7. *Would bury with those that wore them*—i.e. the doublets are so dirty or worn-out that a public executioner, who is entitled to the clothes of the condemned man, would not think worth keeping for himself.

Note I. In England, public executioners were allowed to receive the clothes of a criminal who was condemned to death.

Note II. Commenting on these lines Wright observes, "Shakespeare dressed his ancient Romans like the English of his own day. In the same way, he makes the English custom of giving to executioners the clothes of their victims as a perquisite pre-vail in Rome".

Base—ignoble ; morally low ; mean : selfish ; cowardly.

Line 8. *Ere yet the fight be done*—till the fight is over.

Pack up—put things to-gether in a bundle, a box or a bag for transport or storing.

Down with them—i.e. curse them !

Lines 4-8. *See here these movers that do prize their hours ......Ere yet the fight be done, pack up*. **Explanation.** Pointing out some Roman soldiers, who are looking for plunder, Marcius says that they are very active fellows, who regard their time as well-spent in seizing even a broken and thus useless, silver coin. They are putting things in a bundle, even before the fight is over. These things include such trifles as cushions, spoons made of lead, pieces of iron worth a small Dutch coin, and jackets which are so worthless that even public executioners, who are allowed to receive the clothes of the condemned person, would not like to keep for themselves.

Line 9. *Hark*—listen. *The general*—i.e. Cominius. *To him*—let us go to Cominius.

Line 10. *There is the man of my soul's hate, Aufidius*—there is Aufidius, whom I hate from the bottom of my heart.

Line 11. *Piercing*—breaking through the ranks ; forcing his way through.

Valiant—brave.

Line 12. *Convenient numbers*—a sufficient force.

To make good—secure ; hold ; defend.

(*Good*=safe)

Line 13. *Whilst*—while. *Spirit*—courage. *Haste*—hasten.

Line 14. *Thou bleeds't*—you bleed.

Line 15. *Thy exercise has been too violent*—i.e. you have already over-exerted your-self.

Line 16. *Course*—bout ; encounter.

Note. The fight is compared to a feast in which the first course is followed by the second (and the main) course.

Line 17. *Yet not*—not yet.

My work hath yet not warm'd me—my work has not so far made me as enthusiastic as it will make me after some time.

Line 18. *Drop*—shed. *Physical*—whole-some ; medicinal ; restorative ; good for the body.

Lines 18-19. *The blood I drop is rather physical than dangerous to me*—Marcius says that the blood that he is shedding from his body is proving whole-some (healthy) to him rather than being a source of danger. In other words, it is restoring his health instead of weakening him.

Thus—i.e. with blood flowing from his wounds.

Line 21. *Fall deep in love*--may fall deeply in love. *Great charms* mighty magic. (*Charms*=magic ; spells).

Line 22. *Mis-guide*—turn aside. *Opposers*—enemies.

Lines 20-22. *Now the fair goddess, Fortune......swords*—Lartius prays that the goddess of fortune may favour Marcius and her mighty magic may turn aside the blows of his (Marcius's) enemies.

Line 23. *Prosperity be thy page*—prosperity may wait on you wherever you go, just as a servant waits on his master.

(*Page*=servant).

Lines 23-24. *Thy friend no less than those she places highest*—'may the goddess of fortune be as good a friend to you as to those whom she has raised to the highest eminence.'

(*Those*=of those)

Line 27. *Thither*—to that place (i.e. the market-place).

Line 28. *Know our mind*—know our intentions.

———

Act I, Scene VI

I. Summary of the Scene :

Cominius and his soldiers, after fighting a losing battle against the Volscians, withdraw from the battle-field, to a place near the camp of Cominius. A messenger brings the news that Lartius and Marcius have been driven to their trenches. Just then Marcius arrives there and enquires from Cominius if the former has arrived in time to help him.

Marcius informs Cominius that the city of Corioli has been captured by the Roman forces, and that Lartius is now holding it in the name of Rome. Marcius further wants to know if Cominius is the master of the battle-field. The latter confesses that he was forced to with-draw. He further informs Marcius that men of Antium constitute the van-guard of the Volscian army which is commanded by Aufidius.

Marcius requests Cominius to allow the former immediately to fight against Aufidius. Cominius agrees to this request and allows Marcius to take with him the soldiers of his own choice. Marcius suggests that he would take with him such soldiers as are fearless and patriotic. All the soldiers shout and wave their swords. They take him up in their arms and throw up their caps. Marcius announces that he will select a certain number of soldiers to accompany him. He asks four men to select quickly troops for his command. Cominius promises, to the soldiers who accompany Marcius, an equal share in the spoils of war.

II. Main events in the Scene.

1. Cominius and his soldiers are forced to with-draw from the battle-field.
2. A messenger informs them that the forces fighting under Lartius and Marcius have been driven to the trenches.
3. Just then Marcius arrives there and informs Cominius that the city of Corioli has been captured and that Lartius is holding it in the name of Rome.
4. Cominius tells Marcius that the former was forced to withdraw.
5. Marcius expresses a desire to meet Aufidius in the battle-field.

6. Cominius allows Marcius to take with him soldiers of his choice.
7. Marcius asks four men to quickly select the troops for his command and leaves for the battle-field.

III. Dramatic significance of the Scene :

This scene, once again, brings out the amazing courage and fearlessness of Marcius. In other words, it glorifies the hero of the play, further. Although he is covered with blood, yet he does not want to take rest or to be "conducted to a gentle bath" and have the "balms applied to him". All that he wishes is that he should be immediately set against Aufidius and his soldiers.

This scene reveals Marcius' idealism as well as his love of his country. He invites only those Roman soldiers to accompany him, who love blood-shed, and who hold their country dearer than themselves. In appealing to the soldiers' sense of patriotism, he presents a contrast to Cominius, who tempts the soldiers with the promise of an equal share in the loot and plunder of war.

Thus whereas Marcius, addressing the soldiers, says :

If any such be here
As it were sin to doubt—that love this painting
Wherein you see me smear'd ; if any fear
Lesser his person than an ill report ;
If any think brave death out-weighs bad life,
And that his country's dearer than himself ;
Let him alone, or so many so minded.
Wave thus, to express his dis-position,
And follow Marcius.

Cominius who is more practical observes :

March on, my fellows .
Make good this ostentation, and you shall
Divide in all with us.

It is to be noted that this is the only scene in the play in which Marcius enjoys a brief spell of popularity among the common soldiers. Thus, in response to his appeal, they all shout and wave their swords ; take him up in their arms and throw up their caps.

Commenting on this scene, a critic has remarked, "With clarity and economy, Shakespeare connects the one fight and the other."

Lastly, this scene gives rise to a considerable suspense. We are left guessing as to what the outcome of the fight between two great soldiers—Marcius and Aufidius—would be.

IV. Shakespeare's debt to North's Plutarch.

Shakespeare has taken a number of details from North's Plutarch, though he has added a great deal to them. Thus Marcius' enquiry regarding the order of the enemies' battle as well as the answer of Cominius, occur in Plutarch. North says, "Marcius asked how the order of their enemies' battle was and on which side they had placed their best fighting men. The Consul (i. e. Cominius) made him answer, that he thought the bands which were in the voward of their battle, were those of the Antiates whom they esteemed to be the warlikest men... Then prayed Marcius to be set directly against them. The Consul granted him, greatly praising his courage."

It is to be remembered that Shakespeare has in at least two cases taken the very words of North, e.g. *the bands which were in the voward of their battle were those of Antiates,* and *then prayed Marcius to be set directly against them.*

Shakespeare departs from Plutarch in the following respects :—

(a) In Plutarch the entire army marches, to the battle under Cominius ; in Shakespeare Marcius selects a few soldiers to accompany him.

(b) Plutarch does not mention that Cominius had to withdraw before Marcius appeared on the scene.

(c) In Plutarch there is no mention of the Antiates' being commanded by Aufidius.

Stage Direction. *In retire*—in with-drawal (*i.e.* with-drawing from the battle-field).

Line 1. *Breathe you*—rest a while ; take breath. *Well fought*—*i.e.* we have given a good account of ourselves in the battle.

We are come off—we have come out of the fight ; we have acquitted ourselves well.

Line 2. *Neither foolish in our stands*—neither foolish in maintaining our position : neither foolish in defending our stand (position) when we could not defend it.

Line 3. *Nor cowardly in retire*—nor with-drawing out of mere cowardice.

Lines 1—3 *We are come off like Romans........ in retire.* **Explanation.** We have given a good account of our-selves in the combat. We have behaved like brave Romans. We have not been foolish in defending our position, when it could not be defended. Again, we have not withdrawn from the battle-field, out of mere cowardice.

Line 4. *Charg'd*—attacked. *Whiles*—whilst ; while. *We have struck*—we have been striking *i.e* fighting.

Line 5. *By interims and conveying gusts*—at intervals, owing to gusts of wind that brought the sound to us.

(*Conveying gusts*=winds blowing in this direction, and conveying the sound of the conflict).

Line 6. *Charges*—attacks. *Our friends—i.e.* Roman forces fighting under Marcius and Titus Lartius.

Line 7. *Lead their successes as we wish our own*—guide them to such results as we wish for ourselves ; bring about the same success for them as we desire for ourselves.

Line 8. *Powers*—forces. *Fronts*—faces. *Encountering*—meeting each other. *Both our powers, with smiling fronts encountering*—both our forces while meeting each other with smiling faces (after the battle is won).

Line 9. *May give you thankful sacrifice*—may offer sacrifices in token of their gratefulness.

Line 10. *Have issu'd*—have come out.

Line 11. *And given to Lartius and to Marcius battle*—and fought against Lartius and Marcius.

Line 12. *Our party—i.e.* the Roman forces. *Trenches*—deep ditches.

Line 16. *Briefly*—short time ago.

Line 17. *Confound*—spend ; waste ; wear away.

How couldst thou in a mile confound an hour—how could you spend one hour in covering one mile ?

Line 18. *Spies*—persons who keep watch on movements of the enemy.

Note. A spy is a person who goes especially in dis-guise, into enemy's camp or territory to inspect works, watch movements and report the result.

Line 19. *Held me in chase*—kept following me. *That*—so that. *Wheel*—make a circuit of.

Lines 19—20. *To wheel three or four miles about*—to go round three or four miles.

Else—other-wise. *Had I*—I should have.

Line 21. *Yonder*—over there ; distant but within view.

Line 22. *As he*—as if he. *Flay'd*—covered with blood, as though his skin had been torn off.

Line 23. *Stamp*—character and bearing.

Line 24. *Before-time*—at other times before.

Come I too late ?—am I very late in coming to the assistance of Cominius ?

Line 25. *Knows not*—cannot distinguish. *Tabor*—a small drum.

Line 27. *Meaner*—inferior.

Lines 25—27. *The shepherd knows not thunder from tabor ....meaner man.* **Explanation.** The shepherd cannot more easily distinguish between the sound of thunder and the sound of a small drum, than I can distinguish between the voice of Marcius and that of inferior men.

Lines 28—29. *If you come not in the blood of others, but mantled in your own*—if the blood with which your body is covered, just like a mantle, is your own and not that drawn from your enemies. (In other words, if you are not seriously wounded, as you must be, if all the blood on your body is your own).

Note. Cominius implies that if the blood is not of Marcius's enemies, he must be so mortally wounded that he will die, and therefore be too late.

(*Mantled*=covered as by a mantle *i.e.* a cloak)

Line 29. *Clip ye*—embrace you.

Line 30. *In arms as sound*—with arms as strong.

Woo'd—made love to ; courted.

Line 31. *Nuptial day*—wedding day.

Line 32. *Tapers burn'd to bed-ward*—wedding torches led the way to the bridal room.

(*To bed-ward*=to-wards bed).

Lines 29—32. *Let me clip ye in arms as sound.........to bed-ward.* **Explanation.** Let me embrace you with arms as strong as they were when I embraced my lady love, while making love to her. Let me be as happy as I was when my wedding day was over, and when the wedding torches led the way to the bridal chamber.

Line 32. *Flower of warriors*—the best or the most famous of soldiers.

Line 33. *How is't with Titus Lartius*—how do things fare with Lartius ?

Line 34. *A man busied about decrees*—a man occupied with declaring judgement.

Line 35. *Condemning some to death*—sentencing some Volscians to death.

And some to exile—and banishing some other Volscians.

Line 36. *Ransoming him or pitying*—requiring a ransom for one man, or remitting it. (*Him*=one)

Pitying—"This may be understood with *him* or with *the other* ; 'either ransoming or pitying one' or 'ransoming one man, then, feeling pity for a second man, merely threatening him''.

Line 37. *Holding Corioli in the name of Rome*—holding Corioli as a possession of Rome.

Line 38. *Fawning*—affectionate. (*Fawn*=to show affection by tail-wagging etc.) *Grey-hound*—slender, long-legged, keen-sighted swift dog used in coursing hares etc.

Leash—the thong or strap with which the hunts-man held in the dog, until the time came for letting him slip.

Lines 38—39. *Even like a fawning greyhound in the leash ....at will*—**Explanation**. Just as a hunts-man with the affectionate grey-hound held in the leash, holds him back or allows him to go in pursuit of hare, just as he pleases.

Note. The latter part of the simile (*i.e.* To let him slip at

will) does not apply to Corioli, because Lartius has no intention to let Corioli slip. Of course, he holds in Corioli just as a huntsman holds in the grey-hound, but he (Lartius) would not let Corioli slip just as a huntsman would.

Line 39. *Slave*—coward and liar (Cominius refers to the messenger).

Line 40. *Which*—who. *They*—*i.e.* the Volscians. *Had beat*—had beaten *Trenches*—deep ditches. *Had beat you to your trenches*—had driven you back to your trenches.

Line 41. *Hither*—here.

Line 42. *Did inform*—did report.

But for our gentlemen—had it not been for our so-called gentlemen *i.e.* common soldiers.

Line 43. *The common file*—the rank and file (as distinguished from the officers) ; common soldiers.

Note. Marcius does not complete the sentence. He, of course, wishes to say : the common file would have ruined us.

A plague—plague on them, curse them.

Tribunes for them—how amusing that these cowardly persons want tribunes to protect their rights.

Lines 44 - 45. *The mouse ne'er shunn'd the cat as they did budge from rascals worse than they*—*i.e.* they were more afraid of Volscian soldiers than a mouse is of a cat.

(*Shunn'd*=avoided. *Budge*=flee before. *Rascals*=wretched soldiers).

Lines 42—45. *But for our gentlemen.........from rascals worse than they.*

Explanation. Marcius refers ironically to the common soldiers and suggests that they were responsible for the retreat of the Roman forces. He feels that they would have given way and would have ruined the chances of victory. He curses them and observes sarcastically that these cowardly persons wish to have tribunes to protect their rights. Further, he observes that the mouse does not fear the cat so much, as they did fear the Volscian soldiers, who were more wretched than they (*i.e.* the Roman soldiers).

Line 45. *But how prevail'd you*—but how did you succeed in overcoming the Volscians ?

Line 46. *Will the time serve to tell*—either 'is there time to tell' or 'is this the time to tell'.

I do not think—I do not think so.

Line 47. *Are you lords o' the field*—are you masters of the battle-field.

Line 48. *Why cease you*—*i.e.* why have you stopped fighting. *Till you are so*—till you are masters of the battle-field.

Line 49. *We have at dis advantage fought*—*i.e.* we were losing the battle for some time.

Line 50. *And did retire to win our purpose*—and withdrew in order to rest in preparation for the next charge.

Line 51. *How lies their battle*—how is the Volscian army placed ? ; what is the battle-array of the Volscian army ? (*Battle*=army).

Line 52. *Guess*—think ; conjecture.

Line 53. *Bands*—troops. *Vaward*—van-guard; front. *The Antiates*—men of Antium.

(*Antium*=an ancient city, about twenty miles south of Corioli).

Line 54. *Of their best trust*—soldiers who enjoy the greatest confidence of Volscians ; soldiers in whom the Volscians have most confidence.

Line 55. *Heart of hope*—centre of their hope.

Beseech—request.

Line 56. *By all the battles*—in the name of all the battles.

Line 57. *Vows*—solemn oaths.

Line 58. *Endure*—remain. *Directly*—*i.e.* face to face.

Set me—place me.

Directly set me against Aufidius—place me exactly opposite Aufidius.

Line 60. *You not delay*—you delay not.

The present—*i.e.* the present occasion.

And that you delay not the present—and that you will not delay to attack at once.

Line 61. *Swords advanced*—swords uplifted.

Note. "Advanced" 'is a technical military term and means 'drawn and carried ready for action.'

Line 62. *We prove this very hour*—we put things to the test; 'put the fortune of the present moment to the proof' 'or try what this hour will bring us'.

Though I could wish—though I should be more pleased if.

Line 63. *You were conducted to a gentle bath*—*i. e.* you took a bath.

Line 64. *Balms*—cooling, healing ointments.

Applied to you—applied to your wounds.

Line 65. *Deny your asking*—refuse your request; refuse anything that you ask.

Take your choice of those—choose those soldiers or troops.

Lines 66—67. *Those are they that most are willing*—they who can best aid me are those who have the best will to do so.

Line 68. *That love this painting*—that love this red blood.

Line 69. *Smear'd*—rubbed over with.

Lines 69—70. *If any fear lesser his person than an ill report*—'if any of you fears bodily danger less than a name for cowardice'; if any of you fears the reproach of cowardice more than personal danger; 'if any-one fears less for his personal safety than he fears getting a bad reputation'.

(*Fear his person*=fear for his person)

Note. "Fear" is used, here, in two senses; '*fear* for his person' and in the ordinary sense with 'ill report' (fear an ill report).

Line 71. *If any think brave death out-weighs bad life*—if any of you thinks that a brave death should be pre-ferred to a comtemptible life.

Line 72. *And that his country's dearer than himself*—and if any of you regards the welfare of his country as more precious than his own life.

Line 73. *So many*—as many as are.

So minded—like-minded (*i.e.* having similar views).

Let him, alone, or so many so minded—let him alone or as many as are like-minded (*i.e.* let either only one man or as many men as have similar sentiments).

Line 74. *Wave thus*—wave his sword aloft as I do.

Express his dis-position—give expression to his sentiments.

Line 76 *O ! me alone ? Make you a sword of me ?*—(This is a much-disputed line. The Folios have a comma after alone and a colon after me (O ! me alone, make you a sword of me :) This would yield the meaning : you use me alone as your weapon, holding me up like a sword.

This sense is not in character, because it makes Marcius appear boastful, which, he as a soldier, is not.

The amended punctuation gives us a better sense. The line means, "you hold me up alone instead of holding up your swords. Do you wish me to be your sword-point". In other words, Marcius is gently rebuking them for not waving their swords aloft and holding him up (instead of their swords).

Line 77. *If these shows be not outward*—if this demonstration of devotion is not merely a pretence.

Line 78. *But is*—that is not.

Lines 76—77. *Which of you but is four Volsces*—there is not one of you who is not equal to many Volscians.

(*Four* is used indefinitely ; it means many).

Line 78. *None of you but is*—there is not one of you that is not.

Lines 79—80. *Able to bear against the great Aufidius... as his*—capable of fighting as bravely as great Aufidius.

Line 82. *Shall bear the business*—shall be given a chance to fight.

Line 83. *As cause will be obeyed*—'as the occasion dictates'; as occasion may require.

Lines 84—85. *And four shall quickly draw out my command, which men are best inclin'd*—and four officers will immediately select the most willing soldiers to be put under my command.

(*My command*=those I am to command).

Line 86. *Make good this ostentation*—prove that this show of bravery is sincere and not a mere pretence.

Lines 86—87. *And you shall divide in all with us* – and you will have an equal share, with us, in the spoils (plunder) of war.

Note. Cominius who is more practical than Marcius, persuades the soldiers by promising them a share in the plunder. Marcius, who is an idealist, appeals to the soldiers' sense of patriotism and their love of fighting, while asking them to participate in the battle.

Act I, Scene VII.

I. Summary of the Scene.

Titus Lartius, after having set a guard upon Corioli, gives instructions to a Lieutenant, before going towards Cominius and Marcius. Lartius instructs the Lieutenant to guard the gates well and to send companies of one hundred soldiers, if the former sends for them. The Lieutenant assures him that Lartius' instructions will be carried out. Lartius tells the Lieutenant to shut the gates behind him (Lartius), and asks a guide to conduct him to the Roman camp.

II. Main events in the Scene :

1. Titus Lartius, before going towards Cominius and Marcius, instructs a Lieutenant to guard the gates of the city and to send companies of 100 soldiers, if he is asked to do so.

2. Lartius asks a guide to lead him to the Roman camp.

III. Dramatic Significance of the Scene :

This is one of the briefest scenes in the play. Its main purpose is to bring Lartius from the city of Corioli to the camp of Cominius, so that he may be by the side of Marcius and Cominius in Scene IX, when Marcius is glorified.

Commenting on this scene Granville Barker observes, "The scene's action and its seven spoken lines help most economically to knit together the movements of the siege and the battle as a whole, in time and place too."

This scene serves to bridge over the interval between Marcius' choice of his soldiers and his encounter with Aufidius.

IV. Shakespeare's debt to Plutarch :

This brief scene is Shakespeare's invention. There is no

parallel for it in North's Plutarch. This fact shows that Shakespeare does not lack inventive power, and rises to the occasion when dramatic requirements want him to do so.

Stage Direction. *Having set*—having placed. *Scout*—a man sent out to get information about enemy or surroundings.

Line 1. *So*—very good. *Ports*—gates (of the city of Corioli). *Keep your duties*—fulfil your duties.

Line 2. *Dispatch*—send.

Line 3. *Centuries*—companies of hundred men each.

Note. The officer of a 'century' was called a Centurian. *Aid*—help ; assistance.

Lines 3-4. *The rest will serve for a short holding*—the remaining soldiers would be sufficient to hold the city of Corioli for a short period.

If we lose the field—if we lose the battle against Aufidius.

Line 5. *We cannot keep the town*—we cannot retain the possession of the town of Corioli.

Fear not our care—do not doubt our being watchful ; rest assured that we will be alert and vigilant.

(*Fear not* =have no fear about)

Line 6. *Hence*—i.e. depart ; go away from here,

Upon's—i.e. behind us.

Line 7. *Guider*—i.e. guide. *Conduct*—lead.

Act I, Scene VIII.

I. Summary of the Scene :

The scene is a battle-field between the Roman and the Volscian camps. Marcius and Aufidius enter from opposite sides. Marcius says that he will fight with none except Aufidius, whom he (Marcius) hates worse than he does a breaker of a promise. Aufidius retorts that he hates Marcius enveid fame more than he does an African serpent. Before fighting, Marcius and Aufidius indulge in a wordy war-fare. Marcius' declares proudly that he worked havoc, single-handed, in Corioli. Aufidius replies that even if Marcius was as brave as Hector,

who was a champion of Marcius' boasted ancestors, the Trojans, he (Marcius) will not escape him (Aufidius).

Next, they begin to fight. A certain number of Volscian soldiers come to help Aufidius. Marcius fights single-handed till Aufidius and his supporters are driven away. Aufidius confesses that his sense of shame is all the greater, because he has not been able to beat Marcius even with his assistants.

II. Main events in the Scene :

1. Marcius and Aufidius enter the battle-field, that is situated between the Roman and the Volscian camps, from opposite sides.
2. They have a wit-combat (battle of wits) before exchanging blows.
3. As they begin to fight, a few Volscian soldiers rush to help Aufidius.
4. Marcius fights single-handed and beats Aufidius and his assistants.
5. Aufidius confesses that he has been beaten hollow by Marcius.

III. Dramatic significance of the Scene :

This scene constitutes the climax of Act I. The two great rivals, Marcius and Aufidius, who hate as well as envy each other, meet in the battle-field. They fight a duel, in which Aufidius is beaten hollow. Marcius single-handed, inflicts a crushing defeat on Aufidius, who is supported by his soldiers. By doing so, Marcius adds another feather to his cap. Already, he has captured the city of Corioli, for the Roman army.

This scene, reveals, once again Marcius' valour as well as courage. It shows that Aufidius, the general of the Volscians, is no match for Marcius, who carries everything before him.

This is a scene of action, in which Shakespeare, once again, makes us see Marcius, the fighting hero, fight and win laurels.

It is to be noted that Plutarch makes no mention of the encounter between Marcius and Aufidius. Three reasons have been given for Shakespeare's changing Plutarch's account of a battle into a personal duel between Aufidius and Marcius :—

(*a*) Shakespeare wants to focus attention on Marcius and Aufidius—two of most important male characters in the play.

(*b*) He wants to avoid repetition of a general battle that has already taken place in Scene IV.

(*c*) He wishes to overcome the difficulty of representing a scene of a general engagement on the stage.

Commenting on this scene Granville-Barker observes, "It is for both Marcius and Aufidius the peculiarly critical moment of the day. But before they come to blows, they go to it with words, the one out-scorning and out-bragging the other,......... Nor is the outcome of this duel to prove lucky. Clean conquest of his enemy might serve him (Marcius) well."

(Granville Barker means, of course, that if Marcius had killed Aufidius in this duel, it would have been more fortunate for him. In that case, Aufidius would not have brought about Marcius' down-fall and death).

IV. Shakespeare's debt to North's Plutarch :

This scene is Shakespeare's invention. He does not owe anything to North's Plutarch. Shakespeare has substituted a *duel* instead of a *general encounter*, in order to focus our attention on Marcius and on the latter's rival, Aufidius. He has also done it because he wishes to contrast Cominius and his officers and men (who were repulsed by Aufidius) with the solitary figure of Marcius. The latter, though he is wounded, beats Aufidius, who is supported by his soldiers, and thereby emerges as the hero of the battle.

Line 1. *But thee*—except you (i.e. Aufidius).

Line 2. *Worse than a promise-breaker*—more passionately than I hate a person, who does not keep his word or promise.

We hate alike—your hatred and mine are equal ; I hate you as much as you hate me.

Line 3. *Afric*—i.e. Africa. *Owns*—possesses. *Abhor*—loathe ; hold in contempt

Line 4. *Thy fame and envy*—your detested fame.

Note. 'Fame and envy' is an example of 'hendiadys', a Greek figure of speech, in which two nouns are employed to convey the idea of an adjective and a noun. Thus, 'fame and envy' give us the sense of envied or 'detested fame.'

Fix thy foot—take up a firm position of defence.

Line 5. *The first budger*—the person who first gives way.

Line 6. *Doom him*—i.e. send him to hell.

Line 7. *Holla me like a hare*—'cry after me as a hunter cries after a hare.'

Line 8. *Corioli walls*—walls of Corioli.

Line 9. *And made what work I pleased*—had things all my own way ; did what I liked to do ; carried everything before me.

Lines 9-10. *'Tis not my blood wherein thou seest me mask'd*—my person (body) is not covered with my own blood, but with that of the Volscians.

(*Mask'd*=dis-guised ; covered.)

Line 11. *Wrench up thy power to the highest*—(This metaphor is from screwing up the strings of a musical instrument, in order to tune it. The line means, of course, 'strain your efforts to the utmost.')

Wrench up—screw up.

Hector—the son of Priam, king of Troy, and the chief champion of the Trojans against the Greeks in the Trojan war.

Line 12. *That was the whip*—that was the whip (i.e. the chief champion) with which the Trojans scourged the Greeks.

Note. Hector worked great havoc while fighting against the Greeks, at the siege of Troy.

Bragg'd—boasted.

Progeny—ancestors ; fore-fathers.

Note. The Romans claimed descent from Trojans through Aeneas, who escaped after the fall of Troy and ultimately reached Italy, where his descendant Romulus founded Rome.

Lines 11-12. *Wert thou Hector that was the whip of your bragg'd progeny.* **Explanation** :—Even if you were as brave as Hector, who was the whip with which the Trojans, from whom the Romans boastfully claim descent, scourged the Greeks in the Trojan war.

(*Of your*=belonging to your)

(*Bragg'd progeny*=the race or ancestry of which you boast).

Line 12. *'Scape*—escape me.

Line 13. *Officious*—meddle-some. *Valiant*—brave. *Sham'd me*—dis-graced me.

Line 14. *In*—by means of. *Condemned*—cursed ; worthy of condemnation.

In your condemned seconds—in supporting me in this cursed way.

Lines 13-14. *Officious, and not valiant, you have sham'd me......seconds*. **Explanation.** As Marcius attacked Aufidius, certain Volscian soldiers came to the aid of their general. Aufidius, however, was not able to beat Marcius even with his seconds (supporters). Aufidius felt all the more dis-graced because Marcius, single-handed, defeated Aufidius and his men. Aufidius, therefore, observes that Marcius has been officious (meddle-some) in providing him (Aufidius) with supporters, by attacking him (Aufidius) fiercely. Because if Marcius had not attacked Aufidius furiously, Aufidius's men would not have rushed to their general's help.

Deighton explains these lines as follows :

"By rendering me this assistance, for which I can only curse you, you have dis-graced me, and so far from proving your own valour, have only shown yourself meddle-some in what does not concern you."

Act I, Scene IX

I. Summary of the Scene :

The scene is the Roman Camp. Cominius and some Roman soldiers enter at one side ; Marcius, with his arm in a sling, and some other Roman soldiers, enter at the other side.

Cominius, while paying a glowing tribute to Marcius, says that Roman senators, ladies and even the Tribunes would feel delighted and thrilled to learn the exploits of Marcius. The Tribunes, who hate Marcius, will thank the gods that Rome has such a soldier as he (Marcius).

Just then Titus Lartius, accompanied by his soldiers, enters. Referring to Marcius, Lartius says that Marcius is the man who did all the fighting, while they only formed a part of the show.

Marcius protests saying that he should not be praised, as he has only done his duty by his country, like the other Roman soldiers.

Cominius asks Marcius not to under-rate his heroic deeds. The former further offers to Marcius one tenth of the spoils of war, before they are distributed among the Roman soldiers.

Marcius refuses to accept this offer as he cannot consent to take a bribe for his heroic deeds. He insists on having only his fair share, along with other soldiers.

The Roman soldiers extol Marcius for his act of refusal. They throw up their caps and lances, in order to express their joy. A long flourish (notes on the trumpet) is sounded in honour of Marcius. He objects to sounding trumpets in order to pay a tribute to a hero. He suggests that this is a misuse of trumpets and drums, which are meant for giving a signal for a battle, and not for flattering a victorious fighter.

Cominius is deeply impressed by Marcius' modesty. The former then announces that Marcius has been awarded wreath (garland) of oak-leaves for his heroism ; and that in token of this honour, Cominius offers him (Marcius) his (Cominius') noble horse, with all his trappings ; and that for his brave exploits before Corioli, the title of Coriolanus has been conferred on him.

All shout in honour of Coriolanus. The latter thanks Cominius and promises to bear the new title. Cominius then announces that they should go to their tent, where before they take rest, he will write to Rome of their success.

He orders Lartius to go back to Corioli and send to Rome the chief men of Corioli, to enter into articles for a peace.

Coriolanus, now, requests Cominius to grant him a favour. The former wishes Cominius to set free a poor Volscian prisoner, with whom Coriolanus had once stayed. Cominius immediately grants this favour, and then suggests that they should go to their tent, where Coriolanus' wounds should be attended to.

II. Main events in the Scene :

1. Cominius praises Marcius for the latter's heroic exploits.
2. Lartius who joins Marcius and Cominius a little later, pays a tribute to Marcius.

3. Marcius protests against the lavish praise **that** is being bestowed on him.
4. Marcius refuses to accept one tenth of the spoils of war, offered by Cominius. Marcius insists on having his fair share.
5. Cominius announces that Marcius has won the oaken wreath (garland). The former offers his noble horse to Marcius and confers on him the title of Coriolanus.
6. Cominius asks Lartius to return to Corioli and send the chief men of Corioli to Rome to negotiate peace.
7. Marcius begs Cominius to set free a Volscian prisoner with whom Marcius had once stayed.
8. Cominius grants this request.
9. Cominius and Marcius go to their tent.

III. Dramatic significance of the Scene :

This scene lays emphasis on the great qualities of Coriolanus and some of the defects inherent in them. It also reveals how he is appreciated and rewarded, for his heroic exploits, by Cominius, the Roman general. He is awarded the oaken wreath (garland) ; further, Cominius offers his best horse to him and confers the title of Coriolanus on him, in recognition of his valour before Corioli.

This scene emphasises Coriolanus' dis-dain of praise as well as his dis-dain of the spoils of war. He repeatedly protests against being extolled (praised). On one occasion he says :

Pray now, no more ; my mother
Who has a charter to extol her blood
When she does praise me grieves me, I have done
As you have done ; that's what I can ; induced
As you have been ; that's for my country.

As far as his dis-dain of spoils of war is concerned, he refuses one tenth of the captured treasure and insists on taking his common share with other soldiers. Two of Coriolanus' other traits (qualities) brought out in this scene are his modesty and his patriotism.

His modesty is to be seen at its best when "saluted with a flourish of trumpets, he exclaims that it is a profanation for the instruments of war to be flatterers." Again, when the soldiers

salute him, he abruptly announces : I will go wash, and when my face is fair, you shall perceive, whether I blush or no.

Lastly, this scene reveals Coriolanus' humanity. He begs Cominius to set free a poor Volscian prisoner, with whom once he (Coriolanus) had lodged (stayed).

On the other hand, this scene gives us the impression that Coniolanus' contempt of praise proceeds from his pridé rather than from his modesty. Coriolanus seems to suggest that he has done very little in comparison to what he is capable of doing. According to one critic, "Cominius, as well as others, fail to see that pride is really the main-spring of what appears to be modesty, and desire for equal justice to all."

IV. Shakespeare's debt to North's Plutarch :

This scene is closely based on North's Plutarch. Shakespeare has taken from Plutarch the following details :—

(*a*) The praise of Coriolanus by Cominius.

(*b*) Cominius' offer to Coriolanus to take one tenth of the captured horses and treasures, and Coriolanus' refusal to accept this offer.

(*c*) The bestowing of the title of Coriolanus on Marcius for his brave exploits before Corioli.

(*d*) Coriolanus' begging the life of a poor Volscian prisoner, with whom he had stayed once.

Note. The following extracts from North's Plutarch reveal how Shakespeare has modelled this scene on Plutarch's narrative :—

(*i*) Then out of the great quantity of treasure, the many horses and prisoners they had taken, he (Cominius) ordered him (Marcius) to take a tenth, before any distribution was made to the rest, besides making him a present of a fine horse with noble trappings, as a reward for his valour.

The army received this speech with great applause ; and Marcius stepping forward said, "That he accepted of the horse, and was a glad man besides ; and as for his other offer, which was rather a mercenary reward than honourable recompense, he would have none of it, but was contented to have his equal part with other soldiers.

(*ii*) Among the Volsces there is an old friend and host of

mine, an honest, wealthy man, and now a prisoner, who living before in great wealth in his own country, liveth now a poor prisoner, in the hands of his enemies. And yet not-with-standing all this his misery and misfortune, it would do me a great pleasure, if I could save him from this one danger, to keep him from being sold as a slave.

(*iii*) Therefore we do order and decree that henceforth he be called Coriolanus.

Note. Shakespeare's departures from Plutarch are :—

(*a*) Shakespeare, unlike Plutarch, places the incidents of this scene on the same day on which the battle was fought.

(*b*) Shakespeare makes Cominius offer his own horse to Marcius.

Stage Directions. *Flourish*—trumpet-call proclaiming the approach of a victor.

A retreat—trumpet-call announcing the end of the battle. *Scarf*—handkerchief used as a sling.

Line 1. *If I should tell thee o'er*—If I reckon up and narrate to you.

Work—i.e. achievements ; victories.

Line 2. *Thou't*—thou wilt.

Line 3. *Where senators shall mingle tears with smiles*—in the senate-house where the senators will hear the narrative of your deeds with a mixed feeling of grief and joy. (They will be grieved to know the hardships that you had to undergo; and they will be delighted to know that you have won a great glory).

Line 4. *Where great patricians shall attend and shrug*—in the gatherings of the aristocratic Romans, where they will listen and shrug their shoulder in dis-belief, because they will feel that the story of such heroic deeds is incredible.

(*Attend*=listen).

Line 5. *I' the end admire*—the great patricians will ultimately applaud your heroic deeds.

Frighted—frightened.

Line 6. *And, gladly quak'd hear more*—and made to tremble will yet enjoy the story.

(The ladies will enjoy the thrill of being frightened and will be anxious to listen to more details of the same type).

Quak'd=made to quake i.e. shudder or tremble).

Dull—stupid.

Line 7. *Fusty*—mouldy-smelling. *Hate thine honours*—hate honours paid to you.

Line 8. *Against their hearts*—against their real feelings.

Lines 10-11. *Yet cam'st thou to a morsel of this feast...... before*—your fight with us was only a morsel in comparison with the feast of fighting that you enjoyed at Corioli.

Stage direction. Power—forces.

Line 12. *Here is the steed we the caparison*—(According to Johnson this line means: this man performed the action, and we only filled up the show).

(*Steed*=horse. *Caparison*=saddle-cloth).

Note. Lartius means that Marcius has borne the brunt of fighting at Corioli.

Line 14. *Who has a charter to extol her blood*—who has a right to praise her own child.

Line 15. *Grieves me*—makes me sad.

Line 16. *That's what I can*—that of which I am capable.

Induc'd—spurred.

Lines 18-19. *He that has but effected his good will...... mine act*—the man who has performed what he resolved to do has in that respect put himself on par wi h me.

Lines 19-20. *You shall not be the grave of your deserving*—you will not be the grave in which your merits are buried. (you should not minimise your merits out of modesty).

Line 21. *Value of her own*—worth of her own children.

Lines 21-23. *'t were a concealment .....to hide your doing*—to conceal your heroic deeds as you wish us to do would be as bad as robbing you of your dues. Nay it will amount to a slander.

(*Traducement*=Calumny ; slander ; false accusation).

Lines 23-25. *And to silence that, which, to the spires and tops......seem but modest*—and to keep silent about that achieve-

ment which, if proclaimed in terms of the highest praise, would appear only to be scantily praised.

(Cominius means that even if Marcius's heroic achievements are praised to the skies, it would be doing them less than justice).

Spire and top=i.e. the highest.

Vouch'd=declared.

Modest=moderate.

Line 26. *In sign*—in token of.

Lines 26-27. *In sign of what you are......army hear me*—in token of what we hold you to be, not as a reward for your heroic deeds, let me declare before the army how I estimate you.

Line 28. *Smart*—feel or give acute pain.

Line 29. *To hear*—at hearing. *Remember'd*—mentioned.

Should they not—if these wounds are not mentioned or called to mind.

Lines 30-31. *Well might they fester......with death*—'the wounds might well fester at the ingratitude shown and find death to be the only cure'.

Fester=putrefy ; rot.

Tent=to probe a wound with a roll of lint.

Tent themselves with death=cure themselves with death.

Line 32. *Ta'en*—taken. *Good*—good in breed. *Good store*—a large number.

Line 33. *Achiev'd*—won. *City*—in this city.

Line 34. *To be ta'en forth*—to be chosen.

Line 35. *In common distribution*—distribution of spoils to the army in general.

Lines 35-36. *At your only choice*—at your choice alone ; the choice of yourself alone.

Line 37. *Cannot make my heart consent*—i.e. cannot persuade myself.

Line 38. *Stand upon*—insist.

Line 39. *My common part with those*—sharing in common with those soldiers.

Line 40. *That have beheld the doing*—that have not fought but have been present at the action.

Stage Direction. *Flourish* —trumpet-call heralding a victor. *Cast up*—throw up in the air.

Line 41. *These instruments*—i.e. the trumpets etc.

Which you profane—which are sacred and which you treat with irreverence or dis-regard.

Line 43. *I' the field prove flatterers*—shall be used in war for the purpose of flattery.

Line 44. *False fac'd*—hypocritical. *Soothing*—flattery.

Line 45. *The parasite's silk*—the silken garments worn by a hanger-on.

Line 46. *Let him*—i.e. let it (i.e. silk)

Be made a coverture—be made a cover (armour) that protects the body.

For the war—to fight the war.

Note. Many editors of Shakespeare have substituted "overture" for "coverture." Overture according to them, yields the meaning : 'offer'.

Some editors think that instead of 'coverture', the word 'armature' should be substituted. (Armature=things which pertain to military profession).

Lines 41-46. *May these same instruments, which you profane .....let him be made a coverture for the wars.* **Explanation.** Marcius does not like that trumpets should be blown in his honour. He thinks that it is misusing musical instruments (trumpets) to employ them for the purpose of proclaiming Marcius's victories. According to him, the proper purpose for which trumpets are meant is to give the signal for the attack in the battle. He adds that when drums and trumpets are used in war for the purpose of flattering a victor, we can well expect that courts and cities be made up of hypocrisy and nothing else. In his opinion when steel becomes as soft as the silken robe worn be a hanger-on (parasite), then let silk be used as armour in the war.

In other words,"when the warrior becomes as soft-hearted as the courtier, then let silk be used instead of steel as armour."

If we substitute the word 'armature' instead of 'coverture' then line 46 will mean : *then let silk be used as a protection in battle.*

Line 47. *No more*—let drums and trumpets proclaim my victories no more.

Line 48. *For that*—because.

My nose that bled—i.e. my nose that received a wound in battle and began to bleed.

Line 49. *Foil'd*—defeated. *Debile wretch*—weak fellow (soldier).

Without note—without being noticed by anyone.

Line 50. *Here's many else have done*—here are many other soldiers who have done the same thing (i.e. who did not stop to wash their noses that were bleeding or who defeated some weak soldiers).

Lines 50-51. *You shout me forth in acclamation hyperbolical*—you proclaim my victory or exploits in an extravagant manner. (*Hyperbolical*=exaggerated).

Line 52. *My little*—my little deeds. *Should be dieted in*—should be inflated by.

(*Dieted in*=stuffed full with)

Line 53. *Sauc'd with lies*—flavoured with false-hoods.

Lines 47-53. *No more, I say! For that I have not wash'd......in praises sauc'd with lies.* **Explanation.** Marcius means that simply because he did not stop to wash his nose that bled in battle or defeated some weak soldier, he should not be praised in an exaggerated manner ; because many other soldiers have done the same, though their exploits have not been noticed by anyone. Marcius adds that his victories are being proclaimed as if he liked that his little exploits should be fed on praises, flavoured with false-hoods.

Line 54. *Good report*—fame.

Line 55. *That give you truly*—who give a true description of you. *By your patience*—with your permission.

Line 56. *You be incens'd*—you be made angry.

Line 57. *His proper harm*—harm to himself.

Manacles—hand-cuffs.

Line 58. *Reason*—argue.

Lines 55-58. *By your patience......then reason safely with you* **Explanation.** If you permit me to say it, if you are angry with yourself, we will put you in hand-cuffs like a person who wants to do harm to himself, rather than argue with you as to the honours to be paid to you.

Line 60. *Wears this war's garland*—is the hero of this war. *The which*—which.

Line 61. *Steed*—horse.

Line 62. *With all his trim belonging*—with the trappings (saddle, armour) etc. belonging to the horse.

Line 63. *What he did*—i.e. his heroic deeds.

Line 64. *With all the applause and clamour of the host*—my words being echoed by the loud applause of the entire army.

(*Host* = army).

Line 66. *The addition*—the added name ; the title (i.e. Coriolanus).

Line 69. *My face is fair*—my face is no longer smeared with dirt and blood.

Perceive—notice ; see ; observe.

Line 70. *Howbeit*—however it be ; at any rate.

Line 71. *Stride your steed*—ride your horse.

Line 72. *Under-crest*—support and wear as a crest. *Addition*—i.e. the title conferred on me.

Line 73. *To the fairness of my power*—as becomingly as I can.

Line 74. *Ere we do repose us*—ere I take rest.

Note. Cominius uses the plural pronoun 'us' instead of 'me'. May be he includes Coriolanus while speaking.

Line 76. *Must to Corioli back*—must go back to the city of Corioli.

Send us—send for us ; send in our name.

Line 77. *The best*—i.e. the chief or leading citizens of Corioli.

With whom we may articulate—with whom we may draw

up articles of peace ; with whom we may negotiate.

Line 79. *The gods begin to mock me*—the gods begin to rebuke my pride. *Now*—just now.

Line 80. *Am bound*—am obliged. *To beg*—to make a petition (request).

Line 82. *I sometimes lay*—once I lodged or stayed. (*Sometimes*=formerly).

Line 84. *He cried to me*—i.e. he cried to me for help, when he was being taken as a prisoner by Roman soldiers.

Line 85. *Was within my view*—was in sight.

Line 86. *Wrath*—anger.

O'erwhelmed my pity—over-powered my feeling of pity ; drove out the pity that I felt.

Line 87. *To give my poor host freedom*—to release my poor host.

O, well begg'd—a noble request indeed !

Line 88. *Butcher*—cruel murderer.

Line 89. *Deliver him*—release or free him.

Line 90. *Jupiter*—Jove (the Roman president of gods).

Forgot—it has been forgotten by me.

Line 93. *Visage*—face. *Dries*—is getting clotted.

Line 94. *Look'd to*—attended.

Act I, Scene X.

I. Summary of the Scene :

The scene is the camp of the Volsces. Aufidius, covered with blood, and accompanied by two or three soldiers, enters. He remarks that the town of Corioli has been captured by the Romans. The first soldier suggests that it will be handed back on fair terms. Aufidius wishes that he were a Roman, as being a Volsce, he cannot put up with the shame of defeat. He fears that the defeated Volscians would not be offered fair terms by the victorious Romans.

He adds that he has fought with Marcius five times and has been always beaten by him (Marcius). He swears by heavens that if he ever meets Marcius, face to face, in a battle, he will either over-power him or be over-powered by him. He

confesses that his rivalry has not the honourable nature, it once had. In the past, he thought of crushing Marcius on equal terms. Now he would like to kill him either in an angry, open fight or by employing cunning.

The first soldier suggests that Marcius is as powerful as the devil. Aufidius thinks that Marcius is braver but not more crafty (cunning) than he (Aufidius).

Aufidius says further that his valour (heroism) has lost its honourable quality, because he (Aufidius) has so often been beaten by Marcius. Aufidius resolves to defy the restraints and privileges which protect an enemy from being attacked. He suggests that neither Marcius' being sleep, nor his seeking shelter in a church, nor his being naked, nor his being ill, nor the sacredness of a temple, nor the business of the Capitol, nor the prayers of priests, nor the times when sacrifices are offered, shall prevent him (Aufidius) from attacking and killing his enemy, Marcius.

Aufidius then asks the first soldier to go to the city and find out the strength of the Roman garrison as well as inquire who the hostages for Rome would be. He says, further, that he is awaited at the cypress grove situated to the south of the city mills, and that the first soldier should bring the news to him there.

II. Main events in the Scene :

1. Aufidius gives expression to his sense of shame and frustration.
2. He concedes (admits) Marcius' superiority as a soldier.
3. He confesses that he has been defeated five times by Marcius, so far.
4. He resolves to employ craft (cunning) or wrath (anger) to avenge himself on Marcius.
5. He admits that his valour has lost its honourable nature and that, in future, he will defy all those restrictions which require a person not to attack and kill his enemy.
6. He sends the first soldier to the city in order to bring to him a report of how matters stand.
7. He asks the first soldier to meet him at the cypress

grove, situated to the south of the city mills.

III. Dramatic Significance of the Scene :

This scene focuses our attention on Aufidius, who plays an important part in the fortunes of Marcius. It affords us an insight into the real character of Aufidius, who strikes us as physically and morally inferior to Coriolanus.

This scene prepares us for the role that Aufidius will play in scenes that will follow. It is true that Aufidius will not appear again till Act IV, Scene V ; but his resolve to avenge himself on Marcius, through wrath or craft, will keep him present in our consciousness, even during the political conflict in Rome.

Aufidius emerges out of this scene as a frustrated soldier, who seems to have been consumed by jealousy. The wild and the out-spoken way in which he bids good-bye to his sense of honour, sheds light on the moral deterioration that has set in his character. His failure to get the better of Marcius in single combats embitters him so much, that he determines to over-look all those restraints and privileges which forbid a soldier to attack and kill his enemy.

Aufidius presents a sharp contrast to Marcius, whose rivalry is honourable and has no admixture of base feelings of jealousy. Aufidius confesses :

Mine emulation
Hath not that honour in't ; for where
I thought to crush him in an equal force,
True sword to sword, I'll potch at him, some way,
Or wrath or craft may get him.

Prompted by feelings of jealousy, Aufidius wishes to take advantage of those circumstances, which normally impose restraints on a noble and honourable soldier. Thus, he declares that :

Nor sleep nor sanctuary,
Being naked, sick, nor fane nor Capitol,
The prayers of priests, nor times of sacrifice,
Embarquements all of fury, shall lift up
Their rotten privilege and custom 'gainst
My hate to Marcius Where I find him, were it

At home, upon my brother's guard, even there
Against the hospitable canon, would I
Wash my fierce hand in's heart.

This speech clearly reveals that Aufidius is henceforward wedded to the motto; everything is fair in love and war. He has decided to employ even the most detestable means to achieve his objective. His defeat in the single combat with his great rival has transformed him beyond recognition.

IV. Shakespeare's debt to North's Plutarch :

This scene does not owe anything to North's Plutarch. The latter does not refer to Aufidius till Coriolanus seeks shelter at his house, after his (Coriolanus') banishment from Rome.

Shakespeare has invented this scene in order to arouse expectation and prepare us for Aufidius's treachery towards the end of the play.

Stage Direction. *Flourish*—trumpet-call. *Cornets*—a kind of horn.

Line 1. *Is ta'en*—is taken.

Line 2. *On good condition*—on fair terms.

Lines 4—5. *I would I were a Roman......be that I am*—I wish that I were a Roman, because being one of the defeated Volscians, I cannot be what I think I have it in me to be. (Aufidius means that he cannot now be as proud and independent as he used to be in the past).

Condition—quality.

Lines 6—7. *What good condition can a treaty find...... at mercy*—what fair terms can a treaty have for the defeated party.

(*At mercy*=at the mercy of the victors).

(*I' the part*=on the side).

Line 8. *So often*—*i. e.* five times. *Beat me*—beaten me.

Line 9. *And wouldst do so*—*i.e.* and would beat me in future.

Should we encounter—if we should cross swords.

Line 10. *By the elements*—by heavens.

Line 11. *Beard to beard*—face to face.

Line 12. *He is mine, or I am his*—either he or I would perish.

Lines 12—13. *Mine emulation hath not that honour in 't it had*—my rivalry with Marcius is no more of that honourable nature that it formerly was; I am not now so honourable a rival of Marcius as I once was.

Where—whereas.

Line 14. *In an equal force*—by or with an equal force; on equal terms.

Line 15. *True sword to sword*—sword meeting sword in honourable combat.

Potch—poke; thrust; stab.

Lines 15—16. *Some way or wrath or craft may get him*—some way in which either an angry open fight or an under-hand trick may get him. (Aufidius means that he will seek Marcius's life either by fighting with him openly or by using under-hand means).

Wrath=anger (here, angry combat).

Craft=cunning; under-hand means.

Line 17. *Subtle*—cunning; artful.

Lines 17—18. *My valour's poison'd with only suffering stain by him*—my heroism has lost its healthy character merely from being eclipsed by Marcius's superiority.

(*Suffering stain*=being dis-graced or eclipsed).

Lines 18—19. *For him shall fly out of itself*—because of Marcius my valour will forsake its true nature or character,

Sanctuary—temple.

Line 20. *Being naked*—*i.e.* Marcius's being naked.

Fane—temple. *Nor Capitol*—nor Marcius's being engaged in public affairs in the Capitol.

Line 21. *Nor times of sacrifice*—neither when sacrifices are being offered.

Line 22. *Embarquements of*—restraints upon; checks upon. *Fury*—anger.

Lines 22—24 *Shall lift up their rotten privilege and custom 'gainst my hate to Marcius*—shall have power to raise their antiquated privilege against my hatred for Marcius.

Lines 19—24—*Nor sleep nor sanctuary......my hate to Marcius.* **Explanation**. Aufidius means that, in future, he will not allow the old and antiquated checks or restraints on fury to stand in the way of his hatred against Marcius. Thus neither the fact of Marcius's being asleep, nor his taking shelter in a church, nor his being naked, nor his being ill, nor the sacredness of a temple, nor the fact of his being engaged in public affairs in the Capitol, nor the prayers of priests, nor the times when sacrifices are being offered, will prevent him from working his revenge.

Aufidius, of course, suggests that he will defy all those circumstances which ensure immunity to a person from attack. He will be absolutely un-scrupulous in avenging himself on Marcius.

Where I find him—wherever I find Marcius.

Line 25. *Upon my brother's guard*—even if under my brother's protection.

Line 26. *The hospitable canon*—the law of hospitality.

Lines 26—27. *Would I wash my fierce hand in 's heart*—I shall work my furious revenge by killing him.

Lines 24—27. *Where I find him......my fierce hand in 's heart*—wherever I find Marcius, even if he may be under my brother's protection, I will defy the generally accepted law of hospitality, which forbids the killing of a guest, and will work my furious revenge, by murdering him.

Line 28. *How 'tis held*—*i.e.* what Roman troops hold possession of it.

And what—and who.

Line 29. *Hostages*—persons taken or given as a pledge to the enemy.

Line 30. *I am attended*—I am awaited (by friends).

Grove—a group of trees.

Line 31. *'Tis south the city mills*—*i.e.* the place where you will join me is situated to the south of the mills.

Thither—to that place ; there.

Line 32. *How the world goes*—how the matters stand ; what is the latest position.

Lines 32—33. *That to the pace of it......my journey*—so that I may accommodate myself to the circumstances.

(*Spur on*=hasten). ———

Act II, Scene I

I. Summary of the Scene.

The scene is a public place in Rome. Menenius is discussing Marcius with the two Tribunes, Sicinius and Brutus. Menenius suggests that the tribunes and the common people hate Marcius, therefore they would not like him (Marcius) to distinguish himself in the war.

Brutus remarks that Marcius suffers from all kind of defects. Sicinius adds that Marcius is particularly proud. Menenius retorts that the tribunes are estimated by the aristocrats, as men of little patience, as short-tempered and as extremely proud. He asks them not to over-look their own faults,and assures them that if they were to examine themselves, they would realize that they are worthless, proud, violent and testy—in short, they are fools.

Sicinius suggests that Menenius himself is no better than a fool. In self defence, Menenius observes that he is a humorous patrician and loves an undiluted cup of hot wine. Further, that he is rather hasty in giving judgment in favour of the person, who first lodges his complaint. Still further, he is a late sleeper rather than an early riser, and is a frank and outspoken man, who calls an ass an ass.

Menenius then satirises the tribunes as persons who are desirous of winning the homage of the common people, and who waste their time by interfering in petty quarrels, between a female orange-seller and a seller of taps.

Brutus tries to hit back and describes Menenius as a better hand at talking light nonsense at a dinner-table than at discharging his duties as a senator in the Capitol.

Menenius replies by saying that the tribunes are so ridiculous that even priests would laugh at them. He adds that Marcius, whom they describe as proud, is worth all their predecessors, since the flood, in which all had perished except Deucalion and his wife. Menenius wishes them good evening and takes leave of them, after calling them the herdsmen of the beastly plebeians.

He now greets Volumnia, Virgilia and Valeria and asks them what they are looking for so eagerly. Volumnia informs him that her son, Marcius, is coming home and they should go to welcome him. Menenius's transports of joy know no bounds. He throws up his cap in the air. Volumnia says that Marcius has sent letters to her, to his wife and to Menenius, informing them of his arrival. Menenius feels overjoyed to learn this and suggests that he will celebrate the event by indulging in merry-making at his home that night. He asks Volumnia if Marcius has received wounds in the war. Volumnia proudly informs him that Marcius comes home wounded and thanks the gods for this fact. She further says that Marcius returns home for the third time with the oaken garland. Menenius wishes to know if Marcius thrashed soundly Aufidius. He is told that, according to Lartius, Aufidius had to flee from the battle-field. Volumnia further informs Menenius that Cominius has informed the senate that the entire credit for winning the war goes to Marcius. In answer to another question, she says that Marcius has received one wound in the shoulder and another in the left arm, and that he had twenty-five wounds upon him, before this expedition.

Preceded by notes on the trumpet, Cominius and Lartius with Coriolanus between them, and accompanied by captains, soldiers and a herald, appear on the scene. Coriolanus is crowned with an oaken garland.

The herald announces to all the Romans that Marcius fought single-handed within the gates of Corioli, and that in recognition of his valour, the title of Coriolanus has been bestowed on him. All the Romans welcome and applaud Coriolanus. The latter asks them to praise him no more, for it offends his heart. Cominius points out Volumnia to Coriolanus, who kneels before her. She asks him to rise, feeling proud of his new title—Coriolanus. Coriolanus then greets his wife who is standing silently there Menenius welcomes the three generals—Cominius, Lartius and Coriolanus—and says that Rome should be proud of them.

Coriolanus tells his mother and his wife that he must call on the patricians before he returns home. Volumnia expresses her satisfaction that all her wishes have been fulfilled. There is, however, one distinction which her son has yet to win, namely

consulship. She feels sure, however, that Rome will offer it to her brave son.

Cominius, Coriolanus, Lartius and others proceed to the Capitol in a procession. Brutus and Sicinius remain behind. Both of them feel jealous of the honours that people are showering on Coriolanus. Brutus refers to the crowds of admirers that have gathered to welcome Coriolanus. He fears that the tribunes would not be allowed to exercise their functions, if Coriolanus becomes Consul.

Sicinius suggests that Coriolanus will not be able to retain his new honours for long and that the common people will not forget their ancient grudges against him.

Brutus observes that he had heard Coriolanus say that if he were to stand for consulship, he would never appear in the market-place nor put on the gown of humility, nor show his wounds to the people. Sicinius remarks that if Coriolanus sticks to his resolve, his intended course of action will bring about his destruction. Brutus says that they must inform the people that Coriolanus has always held them in contempt and that to the utmost of his power, he would treat them as beasts of burden. Sicinius suggests that people should be prompted at such an occasion when Coriolanus' insolence shall offend them. The former feels that Coriolanus can be easily provoked to grow fiery and insolent.

A messenger informs the tribunes that they are wanted at the Capitol, as the senators want Marcius to be Consul. The messenger further says that he has seen with his own eyes how people of all types have accorded a warm, affectionate welcome to Coriolanus. Brutus and Sicinius, then, go to the Capitol.

II. Main events in the Scene.

1. Menenius discusses Marcius with the two tribunes—Brutus and Sicinius—at a public place in Rome.
2. The tribunes charge Marcius with pride.
3. Menenius retorts that the tribunes are judged by the patricians as impatient, short-tempered and proud.
4. He tells them further that if they examine themselves, they will discover that they are worthless, conceited and foolish.

5. They tell Menenius that he is no better than a fool.
6. Menenius describes himself as a humorous aristocrat, who is fond of un-diluted wine; is a late sleeper rather than an early riser; and is frank and outspoken.
7. Menenius satirises the Tribunes as exploiters of the common people and idlers, who interfere in petty quarrels.
8. Brutus refers to Menenius as a person who is good at talking nonsense at a dinner-table.
9. Menenius retorts that they are ridiculous and herdsmen of the beastly common people. He then takes leave of them.
10. Menenius now greets Volumnia, Virgilia and Valeria, and together they go to welcome Marcius.
11. Cominius, Lartius and Coriolanus accompanied by captains and soldiers enter in the form of a procession. Coriolanus is crowned with the oaken garland.
12. Coriolanus greets his mother, his wife and Menenius.
13. Volumnia says that all her wishes have been fulfilled except one. She suggests that she would like to see her son elected as Consul.
14. Coriolanus and others proceed to the Capitol to see the senators.
15. Brutus and Sicinius, who remain behind, give expression to their feelings of jealousy. They grudge Coriolanus his new honours and disapprove of his being elected as Consul.
16. They plan to instigate the people against him by suggesting that Coriolanus has always held them in contempt. They feel sure that he will provoke the people into turning against him.
17. A messenger summons the two tribunes to the Capitol, as it is decided, that Marcius shall be Consul.

III. Dramatic Significance of the Scene.

This scene marks the beginning of the political war in

Rome. It registers a definite stage in the rise of the conflict. This is to say that the opposing forces—Coriolanus on the one hand, and the Tribunes, on the other—are placed against each other, even though they have not come into an actual clash with each other so far.

The jealousy and the rivalry of the Tribunes put us in mind of their dislike of Coriolanus in Act I, Scene I. In this scene Brutus and Sicinius make no secret of their intense disapproval of Coriolanus as a proud man.

With this scene there begins a civic war which continues to the end of Act IV, Scene II.

This scene throws considerable light on the character of some of the important figures in the play. We have, for instance, a full-length self-portrait of Menenius He describes himself as a (*i*) a humorous patrician (*ii*) fond of an un-diluted cup of a hot wine (*iii*) rather hasty in his judgement (*iv*) a late sleeper rather than an early riser, and (*v*) a frank and outspoken man, who calls a spade, a spade. The comment of Brutus on Menenius' character is quite revealing :

You are well understood to be a perfecter giber for the table than a necessary bencher in the Capitol.

Menenius gives expression to a boyish enthusiasm when on learning from Volumnia that Marcius has written a letter to him, he declares that he will "make his house reel to-night."

Menenius emerges as a witty and clever person whose comments can be often very sarcastic. He is also a skilful debator and the tribunes are, obviously, no match for him.

Volumnia's character is developed further in this scene. She is revealed as a grand Roman mother who feels proud of her son's wounds and the new title that has been conferred on him, and whose one unful-filled wish is consulship for Coriolanus. As usual she presents a contrast to Virgilia who refuses to rejoice in her husband's wounds and prefers silence to speech.

The two tribunes are also further characterised. They strike us as very cunning and jealous officers, who grudge the new honours that are conferred on Coriolanus and who fear Coriolanus' election to consulship as a threat to their own power and popularity. That they are very ingenious conspirators, who know how to plot their enemy's ruin is obvious from their

conversation (Lines 205—260). Their jealousy and malice are brought home to us more than once.

Coriolanus is seen to his advantage in this scene. He does not betray himself at any moment. Rather, his objection to the applause that is being showered on him, reveals his modesty.

This scene, the main subject of which is Coriolanus' home-coming and the warm welcome that is accorded to him, is remarkable for its magnificence. It arouses our expectations and gives rise to a considerable suspense.

IV. Shakespeare's debt to North's Plutarch.

This scene, in the main, is not modelled on North's Plutarch. Shakespeare has however, taken from Plutarch the custom of a candidate's requesting the people for their votes, by wearing a poor gown and by showing them his wounds.

Referring to this practice Plutarch says, "For the custom of Rome was at that time, that such as did sue for any office, should for certain days before be in the market-place, only with a poor gown on their backs, and without any coat underneath, to pray the citizens to remember them at the day of election, which was thus devised, either to move the people the more, by requesting them in such mean apparel (dress), or else because they might show them their wounds, they had gotten in the wars in the service of the common-wealth, as manifest marks and the testimonies of their valiant-ness."

Line 1. *The augurer*—the Roman priest whose duty was to find out whether the gods were favourable to proposed actions, by observing such signs as thunder, the flight of birds etc , or by cutting up birds and observing the position of liver etc.

Note. The correct form is *augur* and not *augurer*.

Line 3. *Not according to the prayer of the people, for they love not Marcius*—not such a news as plebeians (common people) desire i.e. not a bad news.

Note. Menenius means that the plebeians who hate Marcius desire that he should not return home victorious, but their desire has not been fulfilled.

Line 7. *Who does*—whom does.

Line 9. *Ay*—yes. *To devour him*—i.e. the wolf loves the lamb in one way, that is, the way of eating him up.

Line 11. *He's a lamb indeed, that baes like a bear*—Marcius is a lamb who growls like a bear.

(*Baes*= cries).

Line 13. *That I shall ask you*—that I am about to ask you.

Line 16. *Enormity*—fault.

Lines 15-16. *In what enormity is Marcius......in abundance*—'what fault of Marcius's is there which you have not yourselves in a greater degree.'

Line 18. *Stored with all*—abundantly endowed with.

Line 20. *Topping*—surpassing ; out-doing.

Line 22. *Censured*—judged ; thought of.

Of us—by us.

Line 23. *The right-hand file*—i.e. the patricians who are the right-hand men of the state.

Line 24. *How are we censured*—how are we thought of ; how are we estimated.

Lines 25—26. *Because you talk of pride now......be angry* ?—as you were just referring to pride (i.e. Marcius's pride), you won't be angry at what I am going to suggest.

Line 27. *Well, well, Sir, well*—(this reveals the impatience of the Tribunes).

Line 29. *Thief of occasion*—i.e. occasion, acting as a thief.

Will rob you—will deprive you.

A very little thief of occasion will rob you of a great deal of patience—the least matter of annoyance will, as a thief, deprive you of most of your patience.

Line 30. *Give your dis-position the reins*—let your tempers have a free scope ; indulge your temper as freely as you can.

Lines 30—31. *Be angry at your pleasure*—be angry just when and how you please.

Lines 31—32. *At the least, if you take it as a pleasure to you in being so*—provided it is a pleasure to you to be angry ; provided you enjoy being angry.

Line 34. *Not alone*—not only we.

Line 35. *You can do very little alone*—you cannot blame Marcius, without being assisted.

Line 37. *Wondrous single*—extremely silly.

Note. There is a pun on the word 'single'. The word means (1) alone and (2) silly.

Lines 38—39. *You could turn your eyes towards the napes of your necks*—you could observe your own faults.

(According to Johnson there is an allusion (reference to the fable which suggests that every man has a bag hanging before him, in which he puts his neighbours' faults, and another behind him in which he stores his own.)

Line 40: *And make but an interior survey of your good selves*—and examine only your internal faults and weaknesses.

Line 42. *What then*—what would be the result if we were to examine our internal faults.

Line 43. *You should*—you would.

A brace of—a couple of.

Line 44. *Un-meriting*—worthless. *Testy*—head-strong.

Lines 44—45. *Alias fools*—in other words, fools (*Alias*=other-wise).

Line 46. *You are known well enough too*—i.e. you are a well-known fool, your-self.

Line 47. *Humorous*—jesting ; merry ; light-hearted.

Line 48. *Hot wine*—heating wine.

Lines 48—49. *With not a drop of allaying Tiber in't*—with not a drop of water from the river Tiber to dilute the heating wine.

Lines 49—50. *Said to be something imperfect in favouring the first complaint*—reported to be somewhat imperfect as a judge who has a weakness to favour the side which speaks first (without waiting to listen to the second side).

Tinder-like—likely to flame into a passion.

Line 51. *Trivial motion*—slight occasion or provocation.

Lines 51—52. *One that converses more with the buttock of the night than with the forehead of the morning*—a person who would rather go to bed late than get up early.

Converses=has to do with ; associates with.

Buttock=end.

Note. According to Johnson this line means, "rather a late lier down than an early riser."

Lines 53—54. *Spend my malice in my breath*—get rid of my anger with my hasty words.

Wealsmen—legislators ; statesmen ; guardians of public welfare ; tribunes.

Note. Menenius uses this word ironically.

Line 55. *Lycurguses*—Lycurgus was an eminent Spartan law-giver. He lived about 830 B.C.

Lines 55—56. *If the drink you give me*—i.e. what you say to me.

Touch my palate adversely—irritates me.

Lines 56—57. *I make a crooked face at it*—I must show my irritation.

Lines 57—58. *Have delivered the matter well*—have stated your case well.

Lines 58—59. *The ass in compound with the major part o your syllables*—folly mixed up in most of what you state.

Line 60. *Bear with*—put up with.

Line 61. *Lie deadly*—lie terribly.

Line 62. *Good*—honest.

Line 63. *Map of my microcosm*—i.e. my face.

(*Microcosm*=small world. *Mikros* means small and *kosmos*, world. The human body is sometimes called a micro-cosm, as it is thought to be like macrocasm (universe) on a small scale).

Line 64. *Bisson conspectuities*—pur-blind eyes.

(*Conspectuities*=from Latin *conspectus* meaning sight).

Lines 64—66. *What harm can your bisson conspectuities... too*—'what harm can your near-sighted eyes find out by looking at my face, if I am well enough known.'

Line 67. *We know you well enough*—we know what kind of man you are.

Lines 69—70. *You are ambitious for poor knaves' caps and legs*

—you wish that wretched people should take off their caps and bend their legs in bowing to you.

Line 70. *Wear out*—waste.

A good whole-some forenoon—an entire forenoon that could have been better utilised.

Line 71. *A cause*—a dis-pute.

Orange-wife—an old woman who sells oranges.

Fosset-seller—a seller of small taps to be put into casks.

Line 72. *Re-journ*—adjourn; put off.

Line 72—73. *Controversy of three pence*—a dispute in which three pence (a very small amount of money) is involved.

(*Of*=about).

Line 73. *Audience*—hearing.

Lines 69—73. *You are ambitious for poor knaves'...... second day of audience*—you want the common wretched people to take off their caps and bend their legs while bowing to you. You would like to waste the entire fore-noon, which could be more usefully spent, in hearing a dispute between an old woman who sells oranges and a seller of taps (to be put into casks), and will then adjourn the dispute, involving only three pence, to a second day of hearing.

Lines 74—75. *If you chance*—if you happen.

Pinched with the colic—tormented by colic pain.

(*Colic*=severe pain in abdomen).

Line 76. *Mummers*—merry-makers dis-guised in masks (coverings for the faces).

Lines 76—77. *Set up the bloody flag against all patience*—declare a war on patience ; have no patience at all.

Dismiss the controversy bleeding—dis-miss the case or dispute that is not yet settled or decided.

Lines 77—78. *The more entangled by your hearing*—i.e. the case which has become all the more confused because of your interfering in it.

Cause —case : dis-pute ; controversy.

Line 79. *Knaves*—rogues.

Line 81. *Come, come*—no more of it ; stop.

Well understood—well-known.

Line 82. *Giber*—jester. *Table*—dinner-table. *Necessary bencher*—indispensable senator or judge.

Lines 81—83. *You are well understood to be a perfecter giber......in the Capitol*—it is well-known that you are a better person to keep company entertained at a dinner-table than to be an indispensable judge.

Lines 84—86. *Our very priests must become mockers...... as you are*—you are so ridiculous that even our priests, who are the most serious of men, will laugh at you.

Lines 86—87. *When you speak best unto the purpose ......your beards.*—even when your remarks are sensible, they do not call for the wagging of your beards, by which they are accompanied.

(*Wagging*=shaking).

Lines 87—90. *And your beards deserve......ass's pack-saddle*—your beards can be used only for the padding of a cobbler's seat or for the saddle of an ass.

(*Botcher*=cobbler or a patcher of old clothes).

(*Pack-saddle*=saddle on which goods are packed).

Line 90. *You must be saying*—you cannot help saying.

Line 91. *In a cheap estimation*—at the lowest valuation.

Line 92. *Deucalion*—Deucalion was king of Phthia in Thessaly. He and his wife Pyrrha were the only two persons, saved in a boat, when Zeus sent a flood to destroy all the human beings, as a punishment for the impiety of Lycaon, king of Arcadia.

Lines 92—93. *Per-adventure*—perhaps. *Were hereditary hangmen*—handed down the office of hangman from father to son

Note. Menenius refers to the office of hangman as a dignified one, as something of which one should feel proud.

Line 94. *Good-den*—good evening (God give you good even (evening).

Your worship—a term of respect, here used ironically.

Line 95. *Would infect my brain*—make me mad.

Being—*i.e.* being, as you are.

The herdsmen—drovers of the herd.

Line 96. *Beastly*—beast-like ; animal-like.

I will be bold—I will venture ; I will take the liberty.

Lines 96—97. *Take my leave of you—i.e.* I will depart.

Lines 98—100. *How now, my as fair as noble ladies...... your eyes so fast*—what, my beautiful and chaste ladies—chaste as the moon, if she were an earthly object—makes you look with such anxious eyes towards something.

(*Noble*=chaste. *Diana*=the goddess of moon and chastity).

Line 102. *Juno*—the queen of heaven and the wife of Jupiter.

Lines 104—105. *With most prosperous approbation*—successful and having won approval with his success.

(*Approbation*=glory.)

Line 106. *Take my cap, Jupiter*—(Menenius throws his cap into the air, Jupiter being especially the god of the sky).

Line 107. *Hoo*—hurrah !

Line 108. *Nay*—yes.

Line 109. *The state*—the senate.

Lines 110—111. *One at home for you*—a letter waiting for you at your house.

Line 112. *I will make my house reel to-night*—I will drink to Marcius's health till my very house reels with intoxication of joy.

Line 115. *It gives me an estate of seven years' health*—this happy news has given me a long lease of health.

Line 116. *In which time*—during which time.

Lines 116—117. *Make a lip at the physician*—mock at a doctor ; scorn a doctor.

The most sovereign—the most powerful or efficacious.

Galen—a celebrated Greek physician who lived in Pergamum in 130 A. D.

Note. This is an example of anachronism. Galen did not belong to the time of Coriolanus. He lived about 630 years after Coriolanus' time.

Line 118. *But*—only *Empiricutic*—empiric ; quackish ; not genuine.

Lines 118—119. *Of no better report*—no better valued.

Horse-drench—a mixture for sick horses.

Lines 115—119. *It gives me an estate of seven years' health ......than a horse-drench*—this happy news has given me a long lease of life, during which I can afford to mock at the doctor. The most powerful and efficacious recipe suggested by the famous Greek physician, Galen, is quackish (not genuine) and campared to this happy news, which will preserve my health, is not to be valued more than a mixture for sick horses.

Line 120. *Wont*—accustomed.

Line 123. *If it be not too much*—if his wounds are not serious or dangerous.

A'—he.

Line 125. *On's brows*—*i. e.* he brings victory not in his pocket but on his fore-head, where he wears the garland of oak-leaves.

Line 126. *Oaken garland*—a garland of oak leaves awarded to a Roman hero.

Line 127. *Has he dis-ciplined*=has he thrashed (beaten).

Line 129. *Got off*—*i. e.* escaped, after being beaten.

Line 130. *'Twas time for him too*—it was well for Aufidius that he escaped then.

Line 131. *An*—if.

Line 132. *Fidiused*—aufidiused; soundly beaten.

Note—Fidius is contracted from Aufidius.

Fidiused therefore means, "treated as Coriolanus treated Aufidius."

Line 133. *Possessed of*—informed of.

Line 136. *The whole name of the war*—the entire credit for winning the war.

(*Name*=glory ; renown)

Out-done—surpassed.

Line 138. *In troth*—in fact. *There's*—there are. *Spoke*—spoken ; said.

Line 141. *His true purchasing*—his having truly earned them ; being honestly deserved.

(*Purchase*=acquire in any way).

Line 143. *Pow, wow*—pooh pooh (This is a term of exclamation expressing contempt. Volumnia means that it is absurd to doubt that Marcius deserves his praise).

Lines 146—147. *More cause to be proud*—more reason to feel proud.

Line 149. *Cicartrices*—scars (of wounds)

Lines 149—150. *He shall stand for his place*—he shall stand for consulship ; he will seek to be elected consul.

Note. This is the first suggestion that Marcius, as a victorious general, will seek to be elected consul.

Line 151. *Tarquin*—Taraquinius Superbus was the last king of Rome. He was driven out in 510 B. C. because he was a cruel despot. He made an attempt to regain his kingdom but was defeated in the battte of Lake Regillus in 498 B. C.

Lines 152—153. *There's nine that I know*—in all there are nine wounds of which I have knowledge.

Line 156. *It's twenty seven*—there are twenty-seven wounds.

Lines 156—157. *Every gash was an enemy's grave*—for every wound Marcius received, he killed an enemy.

Line 159. *Ushers*—fore-runners (announcing Marcius's coming).

Lines 159—169. *Before him he carries noise and behind him he leaves tears*—Marcius is heralded by trumpets and he leaves behind him Volscian widows and orphans to mourn the loss of their husbands and fathers respectively.

Line 161. *In 's*—in his. *Nervy*—sinewy ; strong.

Line 162. *Which being, advanced, declines, and then men die*—*i. e.* Marcius's arm is raised, then falls, and as a result men die ; Marcius lifts his arm and as it falls, men die.

Stage Direction. *Sennet*—a set of notes on the trumpet or cornet.

Oaken garland—a garland of oak-leaves.

Line 164. *Corioli gates*—gates of Corioli.

Line 165. *To Marcius Caius*—in addition to Marcius Caius.

These—*i. e.* these names—Marcius and Caius.

Lines 165—166. *These in honour follows Coriolanus*—

these names Marcius and Caius) are now followed by the title of honour—Coriolanus.

Line 172. *Petition'd*—prayed to.

Line 175. *Deed-achieving honour*—honour achieved (won) by heroic deeds.

Line 176. *But O ! thy wife* !—but note here is your wife to welcome you.

My gracious silence—my lovely silent one.

(*Gracious*=lovely).

Hail—a common greeting (It literally means : health to you).

Lines 177—178. *Woudest thou have laugh'd had I come...... to see me triumph* ?—would you, who shed tears at my returning victorious, have laughed to see me brought home dead ?

Note. Marcius lovingly reproaches his wife for her shedding tears of joy and remaining silent.

Line 179. *Such eyes—i. e.* eyes full of tears.

Line 180. *And mothers that lack sons*—and mothers who have lost their sons in the war.

Line 181. *And live you yet*—are you still alive. (This is said in jest).

Pardon—excuse me for not greeting you before.

Line 182. *I know not where to turn*—I know so many among the returning warriors, that I do not know whom to greet first.

Lines 183—184. *I could weep and I could laugh......and heavy*—I could weep because some Roman soldiers are missing and I could laught that so many have returned home victoriously : I am joyous as well as sad.

Lines 186—187. *A curseb egin at......not glad to see thee*—may a curse light on his heart, from its very bottom, who is not glad to see you.

You are three—you are three generals (Coriolanus, Cominius and Lartius).

Line 188. *Should dote on*—should be foolishly fond of.

Yet by the faith of men—yet certainly.

Line 189. *Crab trees*—crab-apple trees (here, the sour-tempered Tribunes).

Lines 189—191. *That will not be grafted to your relish*—*i. e.* 'join with the rest in giving you the praise you relish (as a tree grafted on another bears the same fruit)'

(*To your relish*=to your liking).

Note. The metaphor is from grafting a tree. When a tree is grafted with new variety, it bears a fruit like that of the graft inserted into its trunk.

Menenius means that the Tribunes are like crab-apple trees. When they are grafted with a new variety, they fail to bear apples like those of the graft. In other words, the Tribunes insist on retaining their individuality and refuse to share the opinions of the common people, who wish to honour the victorious generals.

Lines 191—192. *We call a nettle but a nettle......but folly*—we accept things as they are, and do not waste our breath over things which are incorrigible, such as nettles and stupidity.

(*Nettle*=a thorny plant).

Line 193. *Menenius, ever, ever*—just the same old humorous Menenius.

Line 194. *Give way*—make way.

Line 195. *Ere in our own house I do not shade my head*—*i. e.* before I return home.

Line 198. *Change of honours*—a fresh set of honours ; fresh honours.

Line 199. *To see inherited*—to see realized.

(*In-herited*=possessed)

Line 200. *And the building of my fancy*—and the castles that I built in the air.

Line 201. *There's one thing*—*i. e.* consulship.

Line 202. *Rome will cast upon thee*—Rome will eagerly offer you.

Lines 203—204. *I had rather be their servant......with them in theirs*—I prefer to remain a simple subject, so long as I have my own way, to rule in partnership, according to the will of others.

(*Sway*=rule).

Line 205. *Speak of him–i. e.* speak of Marcius.

(*Bleared sights*–those who have dim sight).

Line. 206. *Are spectacled*—have put on spectacles.

Note. Reference to spectacles, invented in thirteenth century, and thus not existing in the time of Coriolanus, is an anachronism.

Prattling—chattering ; talkative.

Line 207. *A rapture*—a fit.

Line 208. *She chats him*—she talks about Marcius.

Malkin—a dirty, coarse girl.

Note. *Malkin* is a diminutive of Mary or of Matilda, common names of kitchen maids.

Lines 208—209. *Pins her richest lockram 'bout—her reechy neck*—puts her finest neck-kerchief round her smoky (covered with smoke) neck.

(*Reechy*=reeky ; smoky).

Line 210. *Clambering*—climbing.

To eye him—to see Marcius.

Stalls–booths.

Bulks—parts of shops projecting into the street.

Line 211. *Are smother'd up*—are crowded.

Leads—the lead—roofed tops of houses.

Ridges–wedge-shaped parts of roofs.

Hors'd—sat astride by spectators.

Line 212. *Variable complexions*–people of different temperaments.

(*Complexions*=dis-positions).

All agreeing–all agreed.

Line 213. *Earnestness*–seriousness.

Seld-shown flamens–priests who rarely appear in public.

(*Flamens*=priests who worship one particular god).

Line 214. *Do press*–exert themselves.

Popular throngs–crowds of ordinary people.

Puff—feel breathless.

Line 215. *A vulgar station*—a standing place among the common people.

Our veil'd dames—our ladies who usually wear veils.

Line 216. *Damask*—red.

Line 217. *Nicely-gawded cheeks*—daintily decorated cheeks.

Wanton—un-restrained. *Spoil*—plunder.

Line 218. *Phoebus*—Apollo, the god of sun.

Lines 215—218. *Our veil'd dames......burning kisses.* **Explanation.** Our ladies who usually wear a veil, now expose their daintily decorated cheeks, in which the white and red colours strive for mastery, to the un-restrained rays of the sun, which is robbing them of their beauty.

(In simple words Brutus means that Roman ladies run the risk of ruining their complexion, by walking about in the sun, without wearing their veil).

Such a pother—such an up-roar ; such axcitement.

Line 219. *Whatsoever god who leads him*......whoever his guardian angel or god may be.

Line 220. *Slily*—secretly. *Crept into*—entered.

Line 221. *Graceful posture*—grace of bearing.

Lines 219—221. *As if that whatsoever god......graceful posture*—as if his guardian angel, whoever he may be, had secretly entered his body and imparted to him grace of bearing.

(*As if that*=as if).

Lines 221—222. *On the sudden I warrant his consul*—on the spur of the moment, the people, swayed by their enthusiasm, will elect him a Consul.

Go sleep—lie dormant.

Lines 222—223. *Then our office may......go sleep*—then during the time he holds office of a consul, our functions will remain dormant.

Lines 224—226. *He cannot temperately transport his honours......he hath won*—Marcius cannot bear his honours with modesty, from the beginning to the end, and as a consequence, he will lose those honours which have been conferred on him.

(*Temperately*=with moderation. *Transport*=bear ; carry *From where he should begin and end*=from the start to the

finish, just as in a race).

Doubt not—doubt not that. *For whom we stand*—whom we represent.

Line 228. *Upon*—because of. *Malice*—ill-will.

Line 229. *With the least cause*—if the slightest provocation is given to them.

Which—*i. e.* cause ; provocation.

Line 230. *Make I as little question*—I have as little doubt.

Line 231. *As he is proud to do't*—as that his pride would enjoy giving such a cause.

Lines 226—231. *Doubt not......as he is proud to do't*—do not doubt that the plebeians whom we represent as Tribunes, instigated by their former ill-will towards Marcius, will easily forget that they have conferred new honours on him, if the slightest provocation is given to them. I am as sure of the fact that Marcius would provide this provocation as of the fact that his pride will enjoy doing it.

Line 233. *Were he to stand for Consul*—if he should be a candidate for consulship.

Line 234. *Market-place*—forum.

Line 235. *Napless vesture of humility*—shabby dress (worn by a candidate for consulship) as a mark of humility.

(*Napless*=threadbare ; shabby ; worn-out).

Note I. It was customary for a candidate for consulship to appear shabbily dressed in the Roman Forum, an open space in the centre of Rome, and there request the citizens for their votes.

Note II. Plutarch, while referring to this fact writes, "For the custom of Rome was at that time, that such as did sue for any office, should, for certain days before, be in the market-place, only with a poor gown on their backs, and without any coat under-neath, to pray the citizens, to remember them at the day of election, which was thus devised, either to move the people more by requesting them in such mean apparel (dress) or else because they might show them their wounds they had gotten in the wars in the service of the commonwealth, as manifest marks and testimony of their valiantness (heroism)."

Line 236. *As the manner*—as the Roman custom is.

Line 237. *Their stinking breaths—is i. e.* their votes. (votes of the common citizens who according to Marcius have foul breath).

'Tis right—exactly ; you are right.

Line 238. *He would miss it*—Marcius will lose consulship.

Line 239. *Than carry it but by the suit of the gentry to him*—than gain consulship in any other way than by the request of the gentle-folk.

(*Suit*=entreaties ; requests).

(*But by*=were it not for).

Lines 241—242. *I wish no better......in execution*—my greatest wish is that Marcius should persist in that determination and translate it into action.

(*Hold*=to hold).

Line 243. *Most like*—most probable ; most likely.

Line 244. *Our good wills*—our earnest endeavours.

Note. "Good wills" may mean 'as our good will' *i. e.* 'as our advantage requires' or as our best efforts try to make it.

Line 245. *So it must fall out to him or our authorities*—so destruction must fall either on Marcius or on our authority as Tribunes.

(*It must*=destruction must).

(*For an end*=to accomplish our object).

Line 246. *Suggest the people*—prompt the people.

Line 247. *Still*—always.

To's power—to the utmost of his power ; so far as he could.

Line 248. *Have made them mules*—have treated them as beasts of burden.

Silenced their pleaders—silenced those who plead their cause.

Line 249. *Dis-propertied their freedom*—deprived them of their individual rights or privileges.

Lines 249—252. *Holding them in human action and capacity......camels in war*—regarding the common people, (so

far as any power to act and think like men is concerned) to be gifted with no more intelligence or fitness for managing worldly affairs, than camels, employed in war.

Who—i. e. camels. *Provand*—food ; provender.

Line 253. *Sore*—bitter ; cruel.

Line 254. *Sinking under them*—sinking under burdens.

This, as you say suggested—such a suggestion as this.

Line 256. *Touch the people*—offend the people.

Which time shall not want—and an occasion for such a suggestion is sure to come in time.

Line 257. *If he be put upon't*—if he is provoked.

Line 258. *Will be his fire*—this will be the spark or flame of fire.

(*His fire*=fire lighted by him).

Line 259. *To kindle their dry stubble*—to light the anger of the common people which will catch fire like dry stubble.

(*Stubble*=ends of grain plants left in the ground after harvest).

Line 260. *Shall darken him for ever*—shall obscure his glory for ever.

Line 262. *Marcius shall be*—Marcius is certain to be.

Line 263. *Throng*—rush in crowds.

Line 264. *Matrons—i. e.* elderly women.

Line 264. *Scarfs*—head-dresses.

Line 267. *Jove's statue*—the statue of Jupiter, the president of Roman gods.

Lines 267—268. *The commons made a shower and thunder......shouts*—the common people showered their caps and broke out in thunderous applause.

Lines 269—271. *Let's to the Capitol......but hearts for the event*—let us go to the Capitol and be alert in judging how matters stand, with a courage to act according to the occasion.

(*Hearts*=courage).

Have with you—come along then.

Note. 'Have with you' is contracted from 'let me have with you'.

Act II, Scene II

I. Summary of the Scene :

The scene is the Capitol, where two officers are laying cushions for the senators. They discuss the certainty of Coriolanus' being elected consul. The first officer suggests that Coriolanus is brave but is extremely proud. The second officer defends Coriolanus by saying that the latter knows the character of the common people too well to flatter them. He says further that Coriolanus deserves to be consul as he has rendered meritorious service to his country.

Cominius, the Consul, accompanied by Menenius, Coriolanus, many other senators, Sicinius and Brutus, and Lictors, enters the Capitol. The Senators take their seats ; the Tribunes take their seats by themselves, while Coriolanus stands. Menenius explains the object of the meeting, namely, to reward Coriolanus for his noble services to Rome. He requests Cominius to recount (give an account of) the heroic exploits (deeds) of Coriolanus. A senator seconds Menenius' request and asks the tribunes to listen kindly and to use their influence with the plebeians, after-wards.

Brutus suggests that they will be able to recommend the case of Coriolanus to the people, if the latter thinks more kindly of the plebeians. Menenius describes this suggestion as off the point. Coriolanus offers to go away, but is persuaded by the first senator to resume his seat.

Cominius, then, narrates the story of Coriolanus' exploits. The former begins by saying that Coriolanus was only sixteen, when he fought against Tarquin, who had raised an army to retake Rome. Coriolanus saved the life of a Roman, and proved the best soldier in the battle-field. He was awarded the oaken garland as a reward for his bravery. Later on, when he advanced in years, he participated in seventeen battles and deprived all other soldiers of the prize of victory.

Referring to his latest exploits, Cominius says that Coriolanus worked havoc before and in the city of Corioli. He entered the gates of the city all alone and captured it single-handed. Next, he proceeded to the battle-field and continued fighting till the Romans were masters of both the city of Corioli and the battle-field.

The first senator remarks that no honour can be out of proportion to Coriolanus' merits.

Cominius, further, informs the senators that Coriolanus spurned (held in contempt) the spoils of war and regarded his deeds as their own rewards.

Menenius, then, tells Coriolanus that the senate is pleased to make the latter a consul. Coriolanus, while accepting the offer, suggests that he should not be compelled to put on the gown of humility and show his wounds to the people in order to request them for their votes.

Sicinius insists upon Coriolanus' abiding by all formalities. Menenius advises Coriolanus to act in accordance with the custom. The latter still protests, saying that he would not like to boast of his wounds. Menenius, once again, asks Coriolanus not to insist upon his objection. The senators, then, depart, wishing all joy and honour to Coriolanus.

In the absence of the senators and Coriolanus, the two tribunes comment on Coriolanus' pride and insolence. Sicinius observes that it appears as if Coriolanus despises the idea that the common people should have the power to vote him to consulship. Brutus suggests that they should inform the people of proceedings at the Capitol. The tribunes then proceed to the market-place where they are being awaited by the people.

II. Main events in the Scene.

1. Two officers discuss the chance of Coriolanus' being elected consul.
2. The first officer admits that Coriolanus is brave but accuses him of pride. The second officer defends Coriolanus.
3. Cominius, Menenius, Coriolanus, the senators, the two tribunes and the Lictors enter the Capitol.
4. Menenius requests Cominius to give an account of Coriolanus' exploits.
5. Cominius refers to the past and present exploits of Coriolanus.
6. Cominius remarks that Coriolanus was only sixteen when the latter fought against Tarquin and was awarded the oaken garland. Later on, he took part in seventeen battles and made his mark as a soldier.

7. Referring to the recent war, Cominius narrates how bravely Coriolanus fought before and in Corioli and in the battle-field.
8. The senators decide to make Coriolanus Consul.
9. He requests them to allow him not to put on the gown of humility and show his wounds to the people, while seeking their votes.
10. Sicinius insists that Coriolanus must abide by the custom.
11. Menenius advises Coriolanus to observe the customary formalities.
12. The senators depart, wishing joy and honour to Coriolanus.
13. Brutus and Sicinius refer to the pride and insolence of Coriolanus in the latter's absence.
14. They go to the market-place to inform the people of the proceedings at the Capitol.

III. Dramatic significance of the scene :

This scene takes place at the Capitol. It marks the commencement of Coriolanus' clash with the tribunes. They give expression to their sense of resentment, even before Cominius rises to glorify Coriolanus. Says Brutus :

Which the rather
We shall be blest to do, if he remember
A kinder value of the people than
He hath hereto prized them at.

Later on, when Coriolanus suggests that he should not be called upon to put on the gown of humility and show his wounds to the people, while seeking their votes, the tribunes insist upon his abiding by all the formalities. Sicinius tells him curtly :

Sir, the people
Must have their voices : neither will they bate
One jot of ceremony.

Still further, when all but the tribunes depart from the Capitol, the latter refer, in a pointed manner, to Coriolanus' hatred of the people. Brutus observes :

You see how he intends to use the people,

To which Sicinius replies :

May they perceive's intent ! He will require them,
As if he did contemn what he requested
Should be in them to give.

From these hints, we are able to guess the shape of things to come. Thus, this scene appears to be the proverbial lull before the storm.

Here, we have Coriolanus at the height of his power. He is idealised and magnified by Cominius in a long speech. Not only his present but also his past exploits are recounted by Cominius, the consul and the general of the Volscian War. He is extolled for his disdain of the spoils of war. The Senators feel that no honour can be out of proportion to his merits, and that he should be made Consul.

Only the tribunes strike a note of discord, in the absence of Coriolanus and the senators. It appears that they have neither forgotten their ancient grudges nor forgiven Coriolanus.

It is to be remembered that when Coriolanus suggests that the privilege of the people, requiring a candidate to wear the gown of humility and show his wounds, be taken from them, he throws the gauntlet down. It is apparent that he will take his stand on this point and fail. In the words of an eminent critic, "Here is indeed the play's turning point, from which it develops into true tragedy, with Coriolanus' character itself rising to heroic stature".

IV. Shakespeare's debt to North's Plutarch :

Shakespeare has taken most of the details concerning Coriolanus' military exploits from North's Plutarch. Thus North says, "The first time he went to the wars, being but a stripling, was when Tarquin did come to Rome. In this battle, Marcius valiantly fought in the sight of the Dictator ; and a Roman soldier being thrown to the ground even hard by him, Marcius straight bestrid him, and slew the enemy. After the battle was won, the Dictator did not forget so noble an act, and therefore first of all he crowned Marcius with a garland of oaken boughs."

Refering to Coriolanus' exploits in the Volscian war North observes, "Marcius, being in the throng amongst the enemies, thrust himself into the gates of the city, and entered

the same among them that fled. He did things, as it is written wonderful and incredible".

Shakespeare departs from North's Plutarch in the following details :

(1) Plutarch mentions that Marcius was but a stripling when he took part in the war against Tarquin ; Shakespeare says that Marcius was sixteen years old.

(2) Shakespeare makes Marcius fight against Tarquin himself ; Plutarch does not mention this fact.

(3) Plutarch does not refer to the number of battles in which Coriolanus participated ; Shakespeare gives the number of wars as being seventeen.

Line 3. *'Tis thought of everyone*—it is thought by everyone.

Line 4. *Carry it—i.e.* succeed.

Line 5. *Brave*—fine.

Lines 5—6. *He's vengeance proud*—he is proud with a vengeance ; he is extremely proud.

Line 7. *Faith—i.e.* in faith ; truly.

Line 8. *Who—i.e.* the great men.

Line 9. *They have loved—i.e.* the people have loved.

Line 10. *Wherefore*—why.

Line 11. *Hate upon*—hate because of. *Ground*—reason.

Line 13. *Manifests the true knowledge he has in their dis-position*—shows how well he knows the true character of the people.

(*In*=of. *Disposition*=true character).

Line 13. *Carelessness*—freedom from care or anxiety.

Lets—he lets.

Line 17—18. *He waved indifferently 'twixt doing them neither good nor harm*—he would have not cared whether he did the people good or harm.

(*'Twixt*=between).

(*Waved*=would have wavered or hesitated).

Lines 18—19. *But he seeks their hate with greater devotion than they can render it him*—but he is more eager to obtain

their hatred than they are to bestow it on him.

Lines 20 - 21. *That may fully discover him their opposite* —that may completely show him to be their opponent.

(*Opposite*=opponent ; enemy).

Lines 21—23. *Now, to seem to affect the malice and dis-pleasure...for their love*—now to seem to aim at the hatred and ill-will of the people is as bad as flattering them in order to obtain their love, and this he dis-likes.

(*Affect*=aim at ; desire).

Line 25. *As those*—as that of those ; as the ascent of those.

Line 26. *Supple and courteous*—pliant and polite.

Line 27. *Bonneted*—saluted by taking off their cap.

Lines 27—28. *Without any further need...report*—without doing anything more to win the approval and good opinion of the people.

Note. 'At all' is to be connected with 'without any further need'. Thus : *without any further need at all*.

Lines 28 - 30. *But he hath so planted...their hearts*—but he has firmly fixed his virtues before their eyes and his brave deeds before their hearts.

Line 31. *Were*—would be. *A kind of ingrateful injury*—a kind of not only injustice but also ingratitude.

(*Ingrateful*=ungrateful).

Line 32. *To report otherwise—i.e.* to deny his honours and actions.

Were—would be. *Malice*—ill-will.

Line 33. *Pluck*—bring down. *Reproof*—reproach.

Stage Direction. *A sennet*—set of notes on a trumpet.

Lictors—"public officers who attended on the chief Roman magistrates. They carried *fasces*, rods bound in the form of a bundle and containing an axe in the middle, the head of which was turned out-wards."

Line 37. *Having determined*—having decided about. *Of*—in regard to ; concerning.

Line 39. *Our after-meeting*—our assembly which is being held further.

Line 40. *Gratify*—reward. *His noble service that*—the noble service of him who.

Line 41. *Stood for*—stood up for.

Therefore please you—therefor be so kind as.

Line 42. *The present consul—i.e.* Cominius.

Line 44. *Well found*—fortunate.

Line 47. *To remember*—show recognition of his services.

Line. **48**. *With honours like himself*—with public honours worthy of him.

Line 49. *For length*—on account of length.

Lines 50—51. *Rather our state's defective......stretch out*—it is rather that the resources of Rome are limited to reward him than that we are un-willing to strain them (*i e.* the resources) for the purpose.

(*Requital* =reward).

Line 52. *We do request your kindest ears*—we request you to listen with as much favour as you can.

And after—and after-wards.

Line 53. *Your loving motion toward*—your kindly influence with.

The common body—i.e. the people.

Line 54. *To yield*—to sanction. *What passes here*—what is approved here.

Convented—come to-gether.

Line 55. *Treaty*—proposal.

Line 56. *Inclinable*—dis-posed to be inclined.

Line 57. *The theme of our assembly*—the person who is the subject of our meeting ; subject-matter for whom we have assembled.

Line 58. *We shall be blest to do*—We shall be most happy to do.

Lines 58 – 60. *If he remember a kinder value...prized them at*—if he may think more kindly and highly of people than he has done hitherto.

(*Hereto*=hither-to).

Line 60. *That's off*—that is beside the point.

Lines 63—64. *But yet my caution was more pertinent than the rebuke you give it*—still I think that the warning I gave was more to the point than the reproach you bestow on it.

He loves your people—he loves the common people, whose cause you defend.

Line 65. *But tie him not to be their bed-fellow*—but do not compel him to be a close friend of the people.

Line 67. *Never shame*—do not blush ; never be ashamed. *What you have nobly done*—*i.e.* your noble deeds.

Line 69—70. *I had rather have my wounds heal......how I got them*—I would like to receive fresh wounds and go through the process of their healing, instead of listening to some one, who praises the wounds that I received in the war.

Line 71. *Disbench'd you not*—did not make you leave your seat ; did not make you rise.

Lines 72—73. *Yet oft, when blows have made me stay... ...therefore hurt not*—often when I could not abandon the joy of fighting, flattering words have driven me off.

Note. Marcius means that what he detests (dis-likes) most is flattery.

Line 73. *You soothed not*—you did not flatter me.

Therefore hurt not—therefore did not do me any harm.

Lines 73—74. *But your people I love them as they weigh*—but I love the people (whose cause you defend) according to their worth.

Line 75. *I had rather have one scratch my head i' the sun*—I would rather sit idly, asking some one to scratch my head in the sun.

Line 76. *When the alarum were struck*—when the signal for fighting was given.

Line 77. *To hear my nothings monster'd*—to hear my little deeds magnified into great ones.

(*Monster'd*=made into marvels).

Line 78. *Your multiplying spawns*—the common people, whose families multiply (increase) as quickly as the young ones of fishes.

Line 79. *That's thousand to one good one*—in whom there is only one good person in a thousand.

Line 80. *He had rather venture all his limbs for honour*—he would rather run the risk of breaking all his limbs while pursuing honour.

Line 81. *One on's ears*—one of his ears.

Lines 78–81. *Your multiplying spawns how can he flatter......ears to hear it.* **Explanation.** Menenius means that Marcius cannot flatter the common people, whose families increase as fast as the young ones of fishes, and in whom there is only one good person in a thousand. Menenius says further that Marcius would risk the breaking of all his limbs while pursuing honour, rather than expose one of his ears to listen to an account of his brave deeds.

Line 82. *I shall lack voice*—no words that I shall say can do justice to the task (of praising Marcius).

The deeds—*i.e.* the heroic deeds.

Line 83. *It is held*—it is believed.

Line 84. *Valour*—heroism ; bravery.

Line 85. *Most dignifies the haver*—confers the greatest nobility on one who possesses valour.

(*Haver* =possesser).

If it be—if that is so ; if this is true.

Line 87. *Be singly counterpoised*—be matched or equalled by any one person (*i.e.* is matchless).

At sixteen years—when he was sixteen years old.

Line 88. *Tarquin made a head for Rome*—Tarquin Superbus, the last king of Rome, raised a force to attack Rome.

Line 89. *Beyond the mark of others*—beyond the power of other soldiers.

Our then dictator—the general, who was in command of Roman forces at that time.

Note. During a national crisis, the Romans used to appoint a general as the dictator of Rome, for a period of six months.

Line 90. *I point at*—I refer to ; I mention.

Line 91. *Amazonian chin*—chin on which there grew no

beard ; beard-less chin.

Note. Amazons were women warriors of Greece. They devoted themselves to hunting and fighting.

Line 92. *The bristled lips*—the bearded men.

He bestrid—he stood over the fallen body of.

Line 93. *An o'er pressed Roman*—a Roman attacked by more assailants than he could deal with.

(*O'er-pressed*=over-powered).

I' the consul's view—in the sight of the consul.

Line 94. *Tarquin's self*—*i.e.* Tarquin himself.

Line 95. *Struck him on his knee*—gave him a blow that brought him on his knees.

Line 96. *When he might act the woman in the scene*—when he was young enough to play the part of a woman on the stage.

Note. This refers to an Elizabethan custom. A woman's part in a play was given to a young boy.

Line 97. *I' the field*—in the battle-field.

Meed—reward.

Line 98. *Was brow-bound with the oak*—was given the civic-crown of oak leaves for saving the life of a Roman citizen.

Lines 98—99. *His pupil age man enter'd thus*—passing thus from boyhood to man-hood.

He waxed like a sea—he grew in power and strength like a sea.

Line 100. *Brunt*—the shock of an attack.

Line 101. *He lurch'd all swords of garland*—He deprived all other soldiers of the prize of victory ; 'easily swept the prize of victory out o the reach of every sword'.

For this last—so far as this last battle is concerned.

Line 103. *I cannot speak him home*—I cannot do full justice to his heroism.

(*Speak him*=speak of him).

He stopp'd the fliers—he stopped those Roman soldiers who were fleeing from the battle-field.

Lines 104—105. *Made the coward turn terror into*

sport—made the cowardly Roman soldiers treat as amusement what appeared terrible to them before.

Lines 105—106. *As weeds before a vessel under sail*—like sea-weeds before a ship going at a rapid speed.

Obey'd—gave way before him.

Line 107. *Stem*—fore-part of a ship ; prow.

Lines 105—107. *As weeds before a vessel...below his stem*—just as sea-weeds give way to a ship, going at a rapid speed similarly men gave way before Marcius.

Line 108. *It took*—produced the desired effect.

Lines 107—108. *His sword, death's stamp...it took*—his sword which was like a stamp of death, wherever it made its impression, produced the desired effect *i e*. caused death.

Line 109. *A thing of blood*—a mass of blood.

Lines 109—110. *Whose every motion was timed with dying cries*—cries of the dying accompanied every movement of his.

(*Motion*=movement. *Was timed with*=was accompanied by).

Line 110. *Mortal gate*—(*i*) the gate which it was death to enter (*ii*) the gate round which death was raging.

Of the city—*i.e*. of the city of Corioli.

Lines 110—111. *Which he painted with shun-less destiny*—'Marcius set his bloody mark upon the gate, showing that it was his by an inevitable fate'.

(*Shun-less*=inevitable).

Came off—got away in safety.

Line 112. *Re-inforcement*—help ; assistance.

Line 114. *Like a planet*—*i.e*. just as a planet exercises an evil influence on human beings.

(*Planet*=a heavenly body re-volving round the sun),

Now all's his—now he has become the complete master of the city.

Line 115. *'Gan*—began.

Line 116. *His ready sense*.—his quick sense of hearing.

Straight—at once.

Doubled—re-newed ; re-doubled.

Line 117. *Re-quicken'd what in flesh was fatigate*—put a new life into his fatigued (tired) body.

(*Fatigate*=fatigued).

Line 119. *Reeking*—steaming with blood.

Line 120. *A perpetual spoil*—un-ending blood-shed.

Lines 120—121. *Till we call'd both field and city ours*—till we were masters of the city and the battle-field.

Stood—paused.

Lines 123—124. *He cannot but with measure fit the honours...devise him*—no honour that we plan for him can be out of proportion to his merits.

(*Devise*=plan).

Line 124. *Spoils*—spoils (plunder) of war.

He kick'd at—he rejected with contempt.

Line 125. *As they were*—as if they were.

Line 126. *The common muck of the world*—mere dirt or filth.

Covets—desires to possess.

Line 127. *Misery*—*i e.* the miserable or wretched people.

Note Here *misery*, an abstract noun is used for a common noun, the miserable people.

Line 127—128. *Rewards his deeds with doing them*—his deeds are to him their own reward.

Line 129. *To spend the time to end it*—he spends his time simply to pass it (*i.e.* time) away.

Line 133. *Still*—always.

Line 135. *You do speak to the people*—you must ask the people for their votes.

Line 136. *Let me o'erleap that custom*—let me pass over that tradition.

Line 137. *The gown*—(the candidate for consulship had to put on a thread-bare (shabby) gown, while canvassing people for votes.)

Stand naked—stand un-covered (in order to show my wouuds).

Line 138. *Suffrage*—votes.

Line 139. *Pass this doing*—omit this proceeding.

Line 140. *Must have their voices*—must be allowed their right of voting.

Bate—i e. give up.

(*Bate*=abate ; forego)

Line 141. *One jot*—one particle ; the smallest portion.

Put them not to't—do not irritate or offend them by refusing to follow the customary practice.

Line 142. *Go fit you to the custom*—act in accordance with the custom.

Line 143. *your predecessors*—those who were elected consuls before you.

Line 144. *Your form*—the formalities with which you must comply.

Lines 145—146. *And might well be taken from the people*—'it is a privilege that we might very well take away from the people.'

Line 147. *Brag unto*—boast in the presence of.

Line 148. *un-aching scars*—healed scars ; scars of wounds that have healed up.

Line 149. *For the hire*—for the loan.

Line 150. *Their breath*—their voices *i.e.* votes.

Do not stand upon't—do not insist on your objection.

Lines 151—152. *We recommend to you, tribunes of the people to...them*—we entrust to you, who are tribunes of the people, to convey our intention to them (*i.e.* the people).

Line 156. *May they perceive's intent*—may the people perceive his intention.

Require them—request them.

Lines 157—158. *As if he did contemn what he requested ...them to give*—as if he hated the idea that people should possess the power to give what he asked for.

(*Contemn*=hate ; despise).

Line 160. *They attend us*—they wait for us.

———

Act II, Scene III.

I. Summary of the Scene :

The scene is the Forum. Several citizens enter, and start a discussion, concerning Coriolanus' claim to their votes. One of them suggests that they will have to vote for Coriolanus, if he shows them his wounds and tells them his deeds. Another says that when they had demanded corn, Coriolanus had insulted them.

Coriolanus and Menenius, then enter the forum. The latter persuades Coriolanus, who is dressed in the gown of humility, not to feel shy in showing his wounds to the people, because the worthiest men have done so before him. Coriolanus still makes fun of the custom and cannot reconcile himself to it. He refers to the common people as dirty and contemptible.

Then the citizens come to him one by one and he requests them, in a mocking manner, to give him their votes. He, however does not show them his wounds. One of the citizens accuses him of not loving the people. He (Coriolanus) defends himself by saying that he has not been common in his love. Yet, he promises to win the good opinion of the people, by imitating the ways of popular leaders, who pretend to be polite to them.

The citizens give him their votes and depart. Coriolanus, in a speech addressed to himself, curses the custom of begging every Tom, Dick and Harry and declares that contrary to his nature he is pretending to be humble.

Three more citizens approach him. He begs them for their votes, in a very sarcastic manner. They oblige him and then depart.

Menenius, accompanied by Brutus and Sicinius appears on the scene. He (Menenius) informs Coriolanus, that the latter has stood his appointed time, and that the tribunes endow him with the people's votes and that he should meet the senate immediately. Sicinius adds that the people have been invited to meet immediately to confirm Coriolanus as consul. The latter, accompanied by Menenius, then, departs. The citizens re-enter.

Sicinius and Brutus take the citizens to task for their voting for Coriolanus. Some citizens accuse him of mocking

them while begging for their votes. Sicinius rebukes, the citizens for their being too ignorant to see that Coriolanus had been making fun of them.

Brutus remarks that the citizens should have told Coriolanus that the latter had been their enemy and had always spoken against their rights ; further, they should have asked him to promise to be their friend, before giving him their votes.

Sicinius supports Brutus and adds that the citizens should have either secured a promise or provoked Coriolanus into a fit of anger and then have made his anger as an excuse for not electing him consul.

Brutus reminds them that when Coriolanus comes into power, the latter would crush them. The third citizen suggests that Coriolanus is not confirmed yet and that the citizens can withdraw their support. The second citizen says that he will bring five hundred voters to deny him confirmation. The first citizen promises to bring twice this number.

Brutus instigates them to go away from there immediately and to tell their friends that they have chosen a consul, who will deprive them of their liberties and allow them no freedom of speech.

Sicinius suggests that the citizens should assemble and revoke the election which they have made in ignorance. They should insist upon Coriolanus' pride and his hatred of the people as the main objections. They should also refer to the scorn in which he held them, while begging for their votes.

Brutus tells the citizens to lay the entire blame at the door of the tribunes, by saying that the latter had asked them to elect him (Coriolanus). Sicinius supports this suggetion. Brutus tells them further to say that the tribunes instructed them to vote for him, by extolling his great ancestry. Sicinius argues that the people should revoke their confirmation, by suggesting that Coriolanus is their determined enemy.

Brutus asks them to gather their fellow citizens and to return to the Capitol. The citizens promise to do so and depart.

Sicinius suggests that they should reach the Capitol before the people arrive there, so that the citizens and not they

(Brutus and Sicinius) should appear to be the authors of this revolt.

II. Main events in the Scene :

1. Several citizens enter the Forum and discuss Coriolanus' claim to their votes.
2. Coriolanus enters dressed in a grown of humility and asks for the citizens' votes in a mocking tone. He refuses to show his wounds to the people.
3. The citizens give their votes to him.
4. Menenius and the two Tribunes appear on the scene and tell Coriolanus that he should meet the senate, when he will be confirmed as consul by the people.
5. Coriolanus and Menenius depart.
6. The citizens re-enter the Forum.
7. Brutus and Sicinius rebuke them for electing Coriolanus as consul.
8. They remind them that he is their determined enemy and will deprive them of their rights and liberties, when he comes into power.
9. The citizens suggest that they can revoke their confirmation.
10. Brutus and Sicinius instigate the citizens to collect their supporters and to bring them to the Capitol. They also ask them to lay the entire blame on the Tribunes by declaring that the latter had instructed them to elect Coriolanus as consul.
11. The citizens promise to re-appear at the Capitol to revoke their election.
12. Sicinius suggests that Brutus and he should arrive at the capitol, before the people, so that they should not appear to be the authors of this revolt.

III. The Dramatic significance of the Scene :

According to some critics, this scene constitutes the *Crisis* or *Climax* of the play (However, many other critics regard Coriolanus' banishment (Act III, Scene III) as the Crisis).

In this scene Coriolanus who is chosen to be consul

by the senators succeeds in gaining the people's votes. He now needs merely their formal approval to be consul. He, however, never obtains this, because the tribunes prove too clever for him.

This scene, once again, emphasizes Coriolanus' hatred of the people as well as his arrogance and tactlessness. He cannot persuade himself to humour or flatter the common people. He mocks them while seeking their votes. At times, he grows openly sarcastic, for instance, addressing the three citizens he says:

Your voices : for your voices I have fought ;
Watch'd for your voices; for your voices bear
Of wounds two dozen odd ; battles thrice six
I have seen, and heard of ; for your voices have
Done many things, some less, some more ; your voices :
Indeed, I would be consul.

By repeating the words "your voices", he deliberately makes fun of the entire business.

He refuses to show his wounds to the voters and tells them that he will show them (his wounds) only in privacy.

This scene also reveals how fickle and un-dependable a mob can be. The citizens immediately after giving their votes to Coriolanus are easily persuaded by the tribunes to revoke the election. They decide to collect their supporters and withdraw their assent.

The character of the tribunes is further developed in this scene. They emerge as very cunning and tactful demagogues, who have little or no moral scruples. They seem to be fully conversant with mob psychology. They win over the citizens by appealing to the latter's sense of dignity and sense of self-respect. They remind the people again and again that Coriolanus mocked them while seeking their votes. Again, they strike terror into their heart by telling them that as soon as Coriolanus comes into power, he will deprive them of their liberties and privileges. Lastly, they tell them that they (the people) can save their faces by laying the entire blame at the door of the tribunes. The latter obviously wish to kill two birds with one stone. If the blame is laid on them, their connivance in instigating the people will never be suspected. Secondly, the people would have a sound excuse for wriggling out of a difficult situation.

The tribunes, by contrast with Coriolanus, strike us as shrewd politicians, who can always feel the pulse of the common people. They employ all types of weapons in alienating the people from Coriolanus. They make the people appear fools in their own eyes and harp on Coriolanus' ancient malice towads the plebeians. Their arguments have logic and plausibility about them and make a ready appeal to their listeners. Brutus, for example, asks them :

Did you perceive.
He did solicit you in free contempt.
When he did need your loves; and do you think.
That his contempt shall not be bruising to you
When he hath power to crush ?

What could be more convincing than this !

This scene, like so many other scenes in the play, rouses our expectations. We feel that the fate of Coriolanus is hanging in a balance.

IV. Shakespeare's debt to North's Plutarch : Shakespeare has taken from North's Plutarch the details concerning the decision of the citizens to vote for Coriolanus, in recognition of his services to Rome, and Coriolanus' wearing the gown of humility while seeking the people's votes in the market-place.

Shakespeare departs from Plutarch in making Coriolanus refuse to show his wounds to the citizens.

Note. North's Plutarch refers to the custom of wearing the gown of humility by a candidate for consulship and his showing his wounds to the voters, in the following words :

"For the custom of Rome was, at that time, that such as did sue for any office should for certain days before be in the market-place, only with a poor gown on their backs, and without any coat under-neath, to pray the citizens to remember them at the day of election. Which was thus devised either to move the people the more, by requesting them in such mean apparel, or else because they might show them their wounds they had gotten in the wars, in the service of common-wealth, as manifest marks and testimony of their valiant-ness".

Stage Direction. *The Forum*—an open space between the Capitoline Hill and the Velian Ridge, used for public meetings. (It is called the market-place in the play).

Line 1. *Once*—once for all. *Do require our voices*—requests us for our votes.

Line 3. *We may*—we can.

Line 4. *We have power*—we have natural power or force.

Line 5. *We have no power to do*—we have no moral power to do.

Lines 6—7. *We are to put our tongues into those wounds*—we will become the mouth-pieces of his wounds (This is to say, we shall applaud his valour and thus his dumb wounds would be speaking).

Line 10. *In grateful*—un-grateful.

Lines 14—15. *And to make us no better thought of, a little help will serve*—a little effort will enable him to regard us as monsters.

For once—because as soon as ever ; because once when.

Line 16. *Stuck not*—did not hesitate.

Many-headed multitude—*i. e.* Hydra.

Note. Hydra was a many-headed monster which was killed by Hercules.

Line 18. *Of many*—by many.

Line 20. *Auburn*—golden-brown.

Line 20—21. *Our wits are so diversely coloured*—our minds are so different.

(*Diversely*=variously).

Line 23. *Their consent of one direct way*—their agreement to go all in one direction.

Line 27. *Will not so soon out*—will not so soon fly out.

Lines 28—29. *'Tis strongly wedged up in a block-head*—your wit is closely confined to your stupid head.

Line 33. *Rotten dews*—dews that cause things to rot.

The fourth—the fourth-part (of your wit).

Line 34. *For conscience' sake*—for being ashamed to deprive you of total sense.

To help to get thee a wife—to enable you to get a wife (He means, of course, that as getting a wife does not require

much sense, therefore even one fourth of his wit will enable him to get one).

Line 35. *Your trick*—your mischievous jokes.

You may, you may—go on ; you may crack what jokes you please.

Line 37. *Resolved*—decided. *Voices*—votes.

Line 38. *The greater part*—*i.e.* the majority.

Line 39. *If he would incline to the people*—if he were to be more on the side of the common citizens.

Stage Direction. *A gown of humility*—(a candidate for consulship had to wear a shabby gown while asking people for their votes).

Lines 43—44. *By ones, by twos and by threes*—in small parties conisisting of one, two or three citizens.

By particulars—*i.e.* to each citizen separately.

Line 45. *Has a single honour*—has the individual privilege.

Line 46. *Our own voices*—our own votes.

Line 47. *How you shall go by him*—how you will pass in front of him.

Line 48. *Content, content*—very well.

Line 49. *You are not right*—you are wrong in objecting to follow the usual practice.

Line 52. *Plague upon't*—curse it.

Lines 52—53. *I cannot bring my tongue to such a pace*—I cannot persuade myself to speak in such a humble manner.

(*Pace*=manner of speaking).

Lines 54. *Some certain*—some.

Roar'd—shouted.

Line 57. *To think upon you*—to remember you kindly.

Lines 58—59. *They would forget me.........lose by 'em*—they should forget me as they forget the virtues which our clergymen preach to them.

(*Divines*=clergymen).

Line 61. *In wholesome manner*—in a reasonable or respectable manner.

Lines 61—62. *Bid them wash their faces.........teeth clean*—Coriolanus, who has nothing but contempt for the common people, says that he would ask them to do a wholesome thing (healthy thing) *i.e.* to wash their faces and to cleanse their teeth.

A brace—a pair ; a couple.

Lines 64. *What hath brought you't*—What has compelled you to beg like a beggar.

Line 65. *Desert*—merit.

Line 72. *We hope to gain by you*—we expect to get something in return for our votes.

Line 73. *I pray, your price o' the consulship*—I request you to name your price for your bestowing consulship on me.

Line 76. *Ha't*—have it.

Line 77. *Which shall be yours in private*—which I will show to you when we are alone.

Line 80. *A match*—it is a bargain.

Line 81. *Your alms*—your votes which you bestow on me as we bestow alms on a beggar.

Adieu—fare-well.

Line 82. *Odd*—strange.

Line 83. *An*—if

'Twere to give me again—if I had to be asked for my vote again.

Line 85. *Stand*—harmonize ; be in accord.

Tune—sound.

Line 90. *Your engima—i.e.* how do you explain this riddle ?

Lines 91—92. *You have been a scourage to her enemies.........her friends*—you have punished severely the enemies of Rome, but you have not been kind to the friends of your country.

(*Scourage*=punishment)

Line 94. *I have not been common in my love*—I have not conferred my affection freely on anybody.

Line 95. *My sworn brother*—a man who has agreed solemnly to share my fortune.

Note. Sworn brothers were those men in the Middle Ages, who mutually bound each other to share their fortunes.

Estimation—respect ; esteem.

Line 97. *'Tis a condition they account gentle*—the common people regard flattery as a sign of a lovable disposition.

Lines 98—99. *Since the wisdom of their choice is rather to have my hat than my heart*—because the common people, in their wisdom, prefer the external signs of humility to genuine feelings.

(*My hat*=raising of my hat in outward courtesy. *My heart*=my real feelings).

Lines 99—100. *I will practise the insinuating nod and be off to them most counterfeitly*—I will practise to win their good opinion by bowing to them and will take off my cap to them with the best affectation of respect.

Line 101. *I will counterfeit the be-witchment of some popular man*—I will pretend to have the art by which popular leaders bewitch (fascinate) the common people.

Line 102. *And give it bountiful to the desirers*—and I will give it in abundant measure to those who desire it.

Line 103. *Beseech you*—I beseech (request) you.

Line 108. *Seal*—confirm. *Your knowledge*—your information about my wounds.

Line 109. *Make much of your voices*—value highly your votes.

Line 112. *Most sweet voices*—(Coriolanus refers to the voices as most sweet in an ironical manner).

Line 114. *Than crave the hire which first we do deserve*—than wish to possess the wages which we have earned beforehand

Line 115. *Wolvish toge*—(Coriolanus refers to the fable of the wolf in sheep's clothing. He means, of course, that he has to pretend humility, whereas he is not humble at all).

Toge—toga ; the robe worn by a Roman.

Line 116. *Hob and Dick*—*i.e.* Tom, Dick and Harry.

That do appear—that show themselves ; that make their appearance.

Line 117. *Needless vouches*—un-necessary testimony to my merit.

Custom calls me to't—custom bids me to do so.

Line 118. *What custom wills, in all things, should we do 't*—if we should act in all cases as custom requires us to act.

Lines 119—121. *The dust on antique time.........for truth to o'er-peer*—we would be allowing the dust to settle on the records of old time with the result that its true character would be lost sight of, and the mountain of error would attain such a height that truth will not be able to peep across it.

Note. Coriolanus refers to "time" as a book, which is so covered with dust that its true character is forgotten.

(*Antique*=ancient ; old. *Heapt*=heaped. *O'er-peer*= over-peep ; to peer above it.)

Rather than fool it so—rather than that I should act the part of a fool in this fashion.

Lines 123—124. *I am half through......will I do*—I have gone through half of the procedure ; I may go through the other half as well.

Line 125. *Moe*—more. *Voices*—*i e.* votes (voters).

Line 127. *Watch'd*—kept watch.

Note. He uses the word in a military sense.

Line 128. *Two dozen odd*—two dozen or a few more.
Battles thrice six –*i.e.* eighteen battles.

Line 129. *For your voices*—for the sake of getting your votes.

Line 130. *Some less, some more*—some important, others un-important.

Lines 126—130. It should be noted that Coriolanus utters these lines in a sarcastic tone. He deliberately repeats the word 'voices', as if he is making fun of it. He refers to his services to the country by employing the device of under-statement.

Line 132. *Cannot go without*—*i.e.* deserves ; has every claim to.

Line 136. *Amen*—so be it.

Line 137. *Worthy voices*—(Coriolanus is again indulging in bitter irony.)

Line 139. *You have stood your limitation*—You have stood in the Forum for the appointed or prescribed time.

(*Limitation*=limited or appointed time).

Line 140. *Endue*—endow ; invest.

Remains—it remains.

Line 141. *In the official marks invested*—decorated with the insignia of consul.

Line 142. *Anon*—immediately ; at once.

Is this done—is the business over.

Note. He addresses the Tribunes and wants to know whether the business of canvassing citizens is finished.

Line 143. *The custom of request you have discharged*—you have fulfilled the custom of asking for the votes of the people.

Line 144. *Admit you*—accept you.

Line 145. *Upon your approbation*—for the purpose of confirming their election.

(*upon*=for the purpose of).

Line 148. *Straight*—at once. *And knowing myself again*—so that I may be able to recognise myself in my original dress.

Line 149. *Repair to*—be-take myself.

Line 150. *Will you along*—will you go along with us.

Line 152. *He has it now*—He has secured his desire.

By his looks—judging it from his looks (appearance).

Me-thinks—it appears to me.

Line 153. *'Tis warm at 's heart*—it makes his heart very happy.

Line 154. *Weeds*—garments.

With a proud heart he wore his humble weeds—though he wore the gown of humility yet he retained his pride.

Line 157. *Have you chose*—have you chosen.

Line 158. *We pray the gods he may deserve your loves*—we pray to the gods that he may prove worthy of your affection.

Line 159. *To my poor un-worthy notice*—So far as my poor observation goes ; in my humble opinion ; according to my poor judgment.

Line 161. *Flouted us down-right*—sneered at us in an un-qualified manner.

Line 162. *'Tis his kind of speech*—it is his ordinary manner.

Line 163. *Not one amongst us*—there is not one amongst us.

Save—except.

Line 164. *But says*—who does not say.

He used us—he treated us.

Line 165. *His marks of merit*—his wounds which bear testimony to his merits.

For's—for his.

Line 170. *But by*—except by.

Line 172. *Here was*—*i.e.* this was his reply.

Line 173. *Now you have left your voices*—now that you have parted with your votes.

Line 174. *I have no further with you*—I have no further business with you.

Line 175. *Either were you ignorant to see't*—either you were too ignorant to see it.

Line 176. *Of such childish friendliness*—being so weakly good-natured.

Line 177. *To yield*—as to yield.

Lines 175—177. *Why either were you ignorant to see't... ....your voices*—either you were too foolish to see that he was mocking you, or if you saw it, you were so weakly good-natured as to give your votes.

Line 178. *Lesson'd*—taught ; instructed.

When—that when.

Line 181. *Charters*—political privileges.

Line 182. *I' the body of the weal*—in the Commonwealth.

Arriving—reaching ; securing ; arriving at.

Line 183. *A place of potency and sway*—a position of power and authority.

Line 184. *Malignantly*—maliciously ; with ill-will.

Line 185. *Fast foe*—determined enemy.

(*Fast*=firm).

The Plebeii—the plebeians ; the common people.

Line 186. *Be curses to yourselves*—*i.e.* may recoil on you; may do you a great harm.

Line 188. *Than what he stood for*—*i.e.* consulship.

Gracious—kindly.

Line 189. *Would think upon you*—should treat you with consideration ; should remember you.

(*Would*=should).

Line 190. *Translate*—transform.

Malice—ill-will.

Line 191. *Standing your friendly lord*—showing himself both as a master and as a friend.

Line 192. *Fore-advised*—advised or instructed beforehand. *Had touch'd his spirit*—would have acted like a touchstone to test his spirit.

Line 193. *And tried his inclination*—and revealed how he was dis-posed towards the common people.

Pluck'd—compelled him to give.

Line 194. *Gracious*—kind.

Line 195. *As cause had call'd you up*—as the occasion required you.

Line 196. *Or else*—or other-wise. *Gall'd*—irritated. *Surly*—ill-tempered.

Line 197. *Endures not*—does not put up with.

Article—condition.

Line 198. *Tying him to aught*—that binds him to anything ; that restrains him in anything.

So putting him to rage—thus provoking him to anger. (*Rage*=anger).

Line 199. *You should have ta'en the advantage of his choler*—you should have exploited his anger; you should have made his rage an excuse.

Line 200. *And pass'd him un-elected*—and refused to elect him.

Perceive—notice.

Line 201. *Free*—un-restrained; out-spoken.

Line 202. *When he did need your loves*—when he was in need of your good-will.

Line 203. *Bruising*—wounding; injurious.

Line 204. *Heart*—courage and good sense.

Lines 204—205. *Or had you tongues to cry against the rectorship of judgment*—or were your tongues so stupid as to utter words against the dictates of your wisdom.

(*Rectorship*=guidance)

Line 207. *Ere now*—on former occasions.

Denied—refused. *And now again*—and now on the other hand.

Line 208. *Of him*—on him. *They did not ask*—who did not ask for votes.

Line 209. *Your sued-for tongues*—your much sought-after votes.

Lines 207—209. *Have you ere now denied the asker...... your sued-for tongues*—How could you, who, on previous occasions have with-held your consent, bestow your much sought-after votes on a person like Coriolanus, who not only did not ask for them but even made fun of them.

Line 210. *Deny him*—refuse him.

Line 211. *Voice of that sound*—voices that will refuse him confirmation.

Line 212. *Twice five hundred*—*i. e.* one thousand.

To piece'em—to add to them; to back them up.

Line 213. *Get you hence*—go away from here. *Instantly*—at once.

Line 214. *They have chose*—they have chosen.

Line 216. *Make them of no more voice*—allow them no more freedom of speech.

Line 217. *Are as often beat*—are as often beaten.

Line 218. *As therefore* —as for that.

To do so—*i. e.* to bark.

Lines 216—218. *Make them of no more voice......as therefore kept to do so*—he will allow as little freedom of speech to them as is allowed to dogs who are as often beaten for barking as kept for the purpose of barking.

Line 219. *And on*—and after. *Safer judment*—more careful thought or consideration. *Revoke*—cancel.

Line 220. *Your ignorant election*—the election you have made in ignorance.

Enforce his pride—lay stress on his pride.

Line 221. *His hate*—his hatred.

Line 222. *Humble weed*—*i. e.* gown of humility.

(*Weed*=garments).

Line 223. *Is his suit*—while requesting you for your votes.

Scorn'd you—held you in contempt ; mocked you.

But your loves—but your good-will towards him.

Line 224. *Thinking upon*—taking into consideration. *Took from you*—deprived you.

Line 225. *The apprehension of his present portance*—the power of perceiving the significance of his present behaviour.

(*Portance*=bearing ; be-haviour).

Line 226. *Which*—*i. e.* his present behaviour.

Gibingly—in a scornful manner.

Un-gravely—in an un-becoming or un-dignified manner.

Fashion—form.

Line 227. *After*—in accordance with.

Inveterate—*i. e.* long-standing.

Lines 227—228. *Lay a fault on us*—lay the blame at our door ; blame us.

Labour'd—strove ; took pains.

Lines 229–230—*No impediment between......your election on him*—allowing no hindrance to come in the way of our purpose to force you to elect him.

(*Impediment*=hindrance).

Line 231. *More after*—more as a result of ; more according to.

(*Commandment*=instruction ; order).

Line 232. *True affections*—real inclinations.

Line 233. *Must do*—were forced to do.

Line 234. *You should*—you ought.

Against the grain—contrary to inclination.

Line 235. *To voice him consul*—to elect him consul by your votes.

Lay the fault on us—throw the blame on us.

Line 237. *How youngly*—how early in life ; how at an early age.

Line 238. *Stock*—race. *Of*—from.

Line 239. *House*—family.

Line 240. *Ancus Marcius*—the fourth king of Rome.

Numa—the second king of Rome.

Line 241. *Hostilius*—the third king of Rome.

Line 242. *Publius and Quintus*—these two were members of the house of Marcius.

Line 243. *That our best water brought by conduits hither*—(this refers to Quintus Maricus who built a passage in 144 B. C. for the conveyance of water that was named Aqua Marcia).

Conduit=a passage for the conveyance of water.

Line 244. *Censorinus*—*i. e.* Caius Marcius Rutilus who was chosen Censor in 294 and 265 B. C. He enacted a law that no one should be chosen Censor a second time, and was thus nicknamed Censorinus.

Note. It is to be noted that Publius and Censorinus were the descendants and not ancestors of Coriolanus. Publius lived three hundred years after Coriolanus and Censorinus, two hundred years after Coriolanus' time.

Thus this is yet another example of anachronism.

Line 245. *Twice by the people chosen*—Censorinus was appointed Censor twice in 294 B. C. and 265 B. C.

Censor—an officer, next to the dictator, who kept account of the property of the citizens, imposed taxes upon them and supervised their morals.

Line 246. *Was his great ancestor*—(actually Censorinus was a descendant and not an ancestor of Coriolanus).

Line 247. *Beside*—besides ; in addition to.

Lines 247—248. *Well in his person wrought to be set high in place*—has done brave deeds personally which entitle him to a high position in the state.

(*In his person*=personally. *Wrought*=done deeds).

Line 250. *Scaling*—putting into a scale ; weighing ; comparing.

Bearing—behaviour.

His past—his prveious behaviour.

Line 251. *Fixed enemy*—determined foe.

Revoke—cancel.

Line 252. *Sudden*—hasty : thoughtless ; impulsive.

Approbation—confirmation.

You ne'er had done't—you would never have done it; you would never have elected him.

Line 253. *Harp on that still*—continue to harp on that string ; persist in insisting on that.

But by our putting on—had we not urged or instigated you.

Line 254. *Presently*—at once. *You have drawn your number*—you have collected a sufficient number of your fellow supporters.

Line 255. *Repair*—go.

Line 256. *Repent in*—repent of.

Line 257. *Mutiny*—revolt ; strife.

Put in hazard—ventured upon ; risked.

Line 258. *Stay*—wait for. *Past doubt*—*i. e.* which is sure to follow.

Greater—greater mutiny ; greater strife.

Lines 257—258. *This mutiny were better put in hazard... for greater*—it is better that we should risk provoking this strife now, than wait for a greater risk, which is sure to follow in the future.

Line 259. *He fall in rage*—he gets angry.

Lines 260—261. *Both observe and answer the vantage of his anger*—mark and profit by the advantage which his anger will afford us ; watch for and immediately seize upon the opportunity his anger will give us.

Line 263. *And this shall*—and this munity shall.

Line 264. *Goaded onward*—stimulated.

Lines 263—264. *And this shall seem, as partly 'tis their own......goaded onward*—and this mutiny to which we have stimulated them shall appear their own doing, which it, to some extent, is.

———

Act III, Scene I

I. Summary of the Scene :

The scene is a street in Rome. Coriolanus, Menenius, Cominius, Titus Lartius, Senators and Patricians are going through the street. Coriolanus is engaged in conversation with Lartius. The latter confirms that Aufidius has raised a fresh army against Rome, and that his greatest ambition is to defeat Coriolanus in a single combat, and that he lives at Antium.

Just then Sicinius and Brutus enter and ask Coriolanus to proceed no further. Coriolanus and Cominius are surprised and shocked to hear this. Brutus informs them that the people have turned against Coriolanus. The latter observes angrily that the people should not behave like irresponsible children and that the tribunes should exercise some control on them (i.e. the people). He also suspects that the Tribunes have instigated the people against him. Brutus protests against this remark. He tells Coriolanus that the charges of the people against the latter are that he had mocked them and that he had dis-approved of the free distribution of corn, and abused those senators who had supported the cause of the plebeians.

Coriolanus flies into a rage at the mention of corn. Much against the advice of Menenius, he pleads guilty to the charge and declares that the free distribution of corn among the undeserving people, was a mistake. Both Menenius and a senator advise Coriolanus to say no more. Coriolanus, however, refuses to listen to them and resumes his speech, in which he refers to the plebeians as "measles". Brutus retorts that Coriolanus is trying to behave like a god rather than like a common human being. Sicinius suggests that they should convey to the people Coriolanus' opinion about them.

Coriolanus says that he would repeat his words even if he were in a calm frame of mind. Sicinius informs him that he shall not do so. Coriolanus is enraged beyond endurance at Sicinius's use of the word "shall". He suggests to the senators that Sicinius has the cheek to use this word and adds that the

tribunes are trying to dominate the consuls and to lower their prestige. He repeats that those who approved of giving corn gratis (free) to the plebeians had encouraged them to dis-obey the higher authority.

Brutus remarks that people would not like to confirm Coriolanus as Consul, because the latter is so hostile to them. In a long speech, Coriolanus suggests that the plebeians were un-patriotic and un-grateful and that they believed that the patricians had given them corn, out of fear.

At this point both Menenius and Brutus ask Coriolanus to stop. The latter, however, refuses to oblige them. In another long speech, he observes that the patricians have good reasons to hate the plebeians, whereas the latter have no justification in insulting the patricians; further, that it is a sorry state of affairs where the patricians cannot decide anything, without the approval of the ignorant masses. Addressing the senators and patricians, he suggests that they should deprive the common people of their right to elect tribunes.

Sicinius retorts angrily that Coriolanus has spoken like a traitor and shall pay a penalty like traitors. Coriolanus refers contemptuously to the office of the tribunes and suggests that it should be abolished.

Brutus sends for the Aediles. An Aedile enters and is asked by Sicinius to go and call the people. Sicinius further says that on behalf of the people, he would like to arrest Coriolanus as a traitor and as an enemy of the public. He asks Coriolanus to obey and not to resist him. The former spurns him. Sicinius asks the citizens to help him. The Aediles and a crowd of citizens enter. They all surround Coriolanus. Brutus and Sicinus declare that Coriolanus deserves death, and that he should be seized and taken to the rock Tarpeian from where he should be cast (thrown). Menenius tries to pacify the mob as well as the Tribunes. Coriolanus draws his sword. A clash follows in which the tribunes, the Aediles and the people are beaten by Coriolanus.

Menenius and the senators advise Coriolanus to go home. Cominius also suggests that as they are out-numbered, they should not risk a fight with the people. Coriolanus, Cominius and others depart. A patrician comments that Coriolanus has

spoilt his fortune. Menenius remarks that Coriolanus is too noble for the world, and that he would not flatter even the gods, and that he is in the habit of saying, what he feels.

The tribunes, accompanied by a crowd of people, re-enter. They ask for Coriolanus and repeat their intention of throwing him from the Tarpeian rock. Menenius requests them to listen to him. They allow him to make a brief speech.

Menenius tells them gently that Rome has never been ungrateful to her brave sons and that it would be the height of ingratitude to take the life of Coriolanus, who has shed his blood for Rome. He adds that it will be an eternal mark of shame to all the Romans.

Brutus refuses to be convinced by Menenius's arguments and repeats that he and the people would pursue Coriolanus to his house and drag him from there. Sicinius adds that their Aediles have been smitten and the tribunes have beed resisted by Coriolanus.

Menenius suggests that they should make allowance for the fact that Coriolanus has been bred in the wars and is not trained in the use of refined language. He asks the tribunes to allow him to go to Coriolanus and to bring him to a place, where the latter will peacefully submit himself to the judgement of the people.

A senator supports Menenius's suggestion. The tribunes give their consent and ask Menenius to bring Coriolanus to the market-place, where they will wait for him. Menenius promises to do so, and requests the senators to accompany him to Coriolanus' house.

II. Main events in the Scene :—

1. As Coriolanus, Cominius, Lartius, senators and patricians are going through a street. Lartius informs Coriolanus that Aufidius has raised a fresh army against Rome and that he (Aufidius) lives at Antium.

2. Sicinius and Brutus enter the street and ask Coriolanus not to proceed further, as the people are incensed against him.

3. Coriolanus and his companions are surprised and shocked.

4. The tribunes inform Coriolanus that people have several complaints against him. In the first place, he had mocked them. Secondly, he had opposed the free distribution of corn amongst them.
5. Coriolanus loses his temper at the mention of corn.
6. He justifies his action concerning his dis-approval of free distribution of corn among undeserving plebeians.
7. Sicinius says that the tribunes should inform the people of Coriolanus' opinion about them (i. e. the people.)
8. Coriolanus repeats his opinion about the people.
9. Sicinius declares that Coriolanus shall not malign the people.
10. Coriolanus strongly objects to the use of the word 'shall', and suggests that the tribunes are trying to dominate the consuls. He says once again that the free distribution of corn has encouraged the people to defy and dis-obey the higher authority.
11. Brutus observes that people would not like to make Coriolanus consul.
12. Coriolanus calls the people unpatriotic and ungrateful.
13. Menenius and Brutus ask him to stop.
14. Coriolanus refuses to stop and in a long speech suggests that people should be deprived of the right to elect tribunes.
15. Sicinius retorts that Coriolanus has spoken like a traitor and will be punished like traitors.
16. Coriolanus suggests that the office of the Tribunes should be abolished.
17. Sicinius sends an Aedile to call the people. The former calls Coriolanus a traitor, whom he would like to arrest on behalf of the people.
18. The Aediles and citizens arrive and surround Coriolanus.
19. The Tribunes declare that Coriolanus deserves death and should be thrown from the Tarpeian rock.
20. A clash follows in which the Aediles, the tribunes and the citizens are beaten by Coriolanus.

21. Menenius, Cominius and the senaters advise Coriolanus to go home.
22. Coriolanus, Cominius and others depart.
23. A patrician comments on the choleric nature of Coriolanus.
24. Menenius defends Coriolanus by saying that the latter cannot flatter even the gods.
25. The tribunes, accompanied by a crowd of people, re-enter and ask for Coriolanus. They repeat their threat of throwing him from the Tarpein rock.
26. Menenius pleads the cause of Coriolanus. The former asks the tribunes and the people to be grateful to a patriotic hero like Coriolanus and to make allowance for his being untrained in the use of refined language.
27. A senator supports Menenius.
28. Menenius promises to bring Coriolanus to the market-place, where the latter will stand his trial.
29. The tribunes agree to his proposal.
30. Menenius asks the senators to accompany him to Coriolanus' house.

III. Dramatic significance of the Scene : This is one of the longest scenes in the play, running as it does into 336 lines. It is a remarkably exciting and stirring scene as it is full of action and tumult. The Tribunes who are instrumental in bringing about Coriolanus' down-fall are seen to be at the height of their glory. They steal a march upon the tactless Coriolanus by remaining calm and collected, while he flies into one fit after another of passion. They exploit to the full Coriolanus' hatred of the common people. They cleverly charge him with being hostile to the plebeians and defying the authority of the tribunes, who are the defenders of the people's rights and privileges.

Coriolanus' uncontrollable choler and his in-born tactlessness combine to seal his fate. He fails to check himself in spite of the advice of Menenius and the senators and heaps insult upon insult while referring to the common people or the Tribunes. Thus there is a point in Brutus's rebuke :

You speak o' the people,
As if you were a god to punish, not
A man of their infirmity

This scene proves conclusively that Coriolanus is a *good* fighter but a *bad* politician. He lacks tact, reserve, and self-control which are needed to handle a delicate situation. He is excessively choleric and proud. Thus, he owes his downfall to his two fatal flaws or weaknesses—choler and pride. He himself is the author of his woes.

His manifestly tactless speeches embitter the tribunes all the more against him, and the crude manner in which he rides rough-shod over their feelings, enlists our sympathy for them rather than for him. He refers to Sicinius as "this Triton of the minnows." Again, he spurns him (Sicinius) by calling him an "old goat."

In a lengthy and choleric out-burst he suggests the abolition of the office of the tribunes, without taking into consideration the dis-astrous consequences of this thoughtless utterance.

In fact, Coriolanus emerges in this scene as a creature of impulse, who throws all decorum to the winds, once his blood is up.

The First Patrician speaks a truth when referring to Coriolanus, he observes : *this man has marr'd his fortune.*

Shakespeare tries to hold the scales even when he makes Menenius defend Coriolanus in memorable words :

His nature is too noble for the world :
He would not flatter Neptune for his trident,
Or Jove for's power to thunder. His
heart's his mouth :
What his breast forges, that his tongue must vent ;
And being angry, does forget that even
He heard the name of death.

All the same we feel that Coriolanus' down-right condemnation of the tribunes and the common people is un-called for and he would have done well to heed his friends' advice to check himself.

This scene also develops further the character of Menenius who is revealed as a friend and defender of Coriolanus as well

as a shrewd politician. It is he who succeeds in pacifying the Tribunes and who offers the best apology for Coriolanus' haughty be-haviour :

Consider this : he has been bred i' the wars
Since he could draw a sword, and is ill-school'd
In bolted language ; meal and bran together
He throws without distinction.

The atmosphere of tension is sustained throughout this scene. It gives rise to considerable suspense, for as it ends, we are left guessing whether Coriolanus will yield to persuasion or not.

Shakespeare's main problem in this scene is to maintain balance. That he succeeds admirably in doing so is evident from the fact that neither Coriolanus nor the Tribunes forfeit our sympathy. In fact, Shakespeare provides enough justification for the utterances and actions of the protagonist (the leading figure) and his chief opponents.

IV. Shakespeare's debt to North's Plutarch :

Shakespeare has utilised to a great extent, the information provided by North's Plutarch. He has particularly modelled Coriolanus' long speech on the historian's (Plutarch's) narrative. At places he has employed the very words used by North.

Other details taken by Shakespeare are as follows :—

(*a*) Coriolanus' rage at the refusal of the people to confirm his election.

(*b*) Coriolanus' belief that the Patricians should not have yielded to the Plebeians.

(*c*) Summoning of the people by the Tribunes.

(*d*) The clash between the patricians and the common people.

(*e*) Sicinius's accusing the patricians to let Coriolanus escape.

Shakespeare's main departures from Plutarch are that the former makes the action of the scene take place in a street instead of the senate, and that he places the clash between the Patricians and Plebeians on the same day and not on the following day as in Plutarch. Again, Shakespeare makes the

distribution of corn gratis take place before the Volscian War, whereas Plutarch does it after the common people refuse to confirm Coriolanus' election.

Line 1. *Had made new head?*—had raised a fresh army.

Lines 2--3. *It was which caused our swifter composition*—the fact of his raising a fresh army was responsible for our coming to terms more quickly.

Line 5. *When time shall prompt them*—when a suitable opportunity will present itself to them.

To make road—to invade.

(*Road*=in-road).

Line 6. *They are worn*—they are worn-out ; they are exhausted.

Line 7. *In our ages*—in our life-time.

Line 8. *Their banners wave again*—*i.e.* their taking up arms.

Line 9. *On safe-guard*—on a written under-taking that he would be allowed to return in safety.

Line 10. *For*—because. *Vilely*—shamefully.

Line 11. *Yielded*—surrendered. *He is retired*—he has withdrawn. *Antium*—the town to which Aufidius belonged. It was situated twenty miles south of Corioli.

Lines 15—16. *That he would pawn his fortunes to hopeless restitution*—that he would pledge all his wealth, possessions etc. beyond any hope of ever redeeming (re-gaining) them.

(*Hopeless restitution*=without any hope of r deeming them.)

So—provided that.

Line 17. *Your vanquisher*—one who has defeated you.

(*Vanquish*=defeat).

Line 19. *I had a cause*—I had an excuse.

Line 20. *To oppose his hatred fully*—'to meet his hatred with equal hatred on my part.'

Line 22. *The tongues o' the common mouth*—the mouth-ec es of the common people.

Line 23. *Prank them*—deck themselves ; dress themselves out.

Line 24. *Against all noble sufferance*—beyond all that can be endured by the nobility.

(*Sufferance*=endurance).

Lines 23—24. *For they do prank them......all noble endurance*—because they dress them-selves up in an authority which the nobles will never endure (put up with).

Line 28. *The matter* ?—*i.e.* what is the matter ?

Line 29. *Hath he not pass'd the noble and the common* ? has he not been approved by the nobility and the common people.

(*Common*=common people).

Line 30. *Have I had children's voices*—were those who voted for me children, who did not know their own minds.

(*Voices*=votes).

Line 32. *Are incensed*—are en-raged.

Line 33. *Fall in broil*—fall into tumult or confusion.

Are these your herd ?—are you the leaders of such detestable creatures ?

Line 34. *Voices*—votes. *Yield*—give.

Now—at one moment.

Line 35. *Straight*—straightaway ; immediately.

Disclaim their tongues —'refuse to acknowledge their own words.'

What are your offices ?—what is the use of your being tribunes if you cannot control them ?

Line 36. *You being their mouths, why rule you not their teeth*—you are their mouth-pieces. Why don't you prevent them from showing their teeth like a snarling animal ?

Line 37. *Have you not set them on* ?—have you not incited or instigated them ?

Line 38. *It is a purposed thing*—*i.e.* their attitude is deliberate and intentional ; it is no mere accident.

Lines 38—39. *And grows by plot to curb the will of the nobility*—it has originated in a conspiracy to restrain the power of the nobles.

(*Plot*=conspiracy. *Curb*=restrain. *The Nobility*=the nobles).

Line 40. *Suffer't*—if you put up with it.

And live—*i.e.* you will have to live.

Line 42. *The people cry you mock'd*—the people complain that you made fun of.

Of late—recently.

Line 43. *Gratis*—free of charge. *You repined*—you regretted it ; you deplored it.

Line 44. *Scandal'd*—abused ; re-viled.

The suppliants for the people—those nobles who begged corn for the people.

Line 45. *Time-pleasers*—time-servers. *Foes to nobleness*—enemies of the nobility.

Lines 44—45. *Scandal'd the suppliants........nobleness*—Brutus means that when some nobles had pleaded the cause of the people for their receiving corn free of charge, Coriolanus had abused those nobles and called them time-servers, flatterers and enemies of the Nobility.

Line 46. *Why, this was known before*—well, this fact was known by the people, when they voted for me.

Line 47. *Sithence*—since.

Line 48. *You are like*—you are likely ; you are the kind of man to do it.

Lines 48—49. *Not un-like, each way, to better yours*—I am not unlikely, in any way, to do your business better than you.

Note. Warburton explains these lines as : likely to provide better for the security of the common-wealth than you (whose business it is) will.

(*Not un-like*=likely. *Each way*=any way. *To better yours*=to do our business better than you will do yours).

Line 50. *Why then should I be consul ?*—if it is so, I have no right to be consul.

By yond clouds—in the name of clouds that are floating in the distant sky.

Lines 51—52. *Let me deserve so ill of you..........your fellow tribune*—if I deserve as little as you, let me be not consul, but a tribune like you.

(*So ill of*=as ill as).

You show too much of that—you exhibit too much of intolerance.

Line 53. *For which the people stir*—which causes the people to rebel against your authority.

Lines 53—54. *If you will pass to where you are bound*—if you wish to arrive at the place for which you set out.

Line 55. *Which you are out of*—from which you have gone astray , which you have missed.

With a gentler spirit—in a more courteous manner.

Line 56. *Or never be so noble as a consul*—otherwise you will not be so high as to be elected as a consul.

Line 57. *Nor yoke with him for tribunes*—nor go in the same harness with Brutus as a tribune ; nor will be a colleague of Brutus, the tribune.

Lines 53--57. *If you will pass......nor yoke with him for tribunes*—If you aim at consulship, as a traveller wishes to arrive at the place for which he sets out, you must ask the way from which you have gone astray in a more polite manner, otherwise neither you be a consul nor a fellow-tribune of Brutus.

Line 58. *Are abused*—are deceived. *Set on*—instigated.

Paltering—shilly-shallying ; quibbling.

Line 59. *Becomes not Rome*—is not worthy of Rome.

Line 60. *Dis-honour'd*—dis-honouring. *Rub*—obstacle. *Falsely*—treacherously.

Line 61. *I' the plain way of his merit*—in his path to consulship which he deserves.

Tell me of corn—do you refer to the distribution of corn to which I objected.

Line 62. *This was my speech*—I admit without any sense of shame, that I made this speech.

Line 63. *Not in this heat*—not in this disposition which makes the people angry with you.

Line 64. *My noble friends*—as for my noble friends.

I crave their pardons—I wish them to excuse me.

Line 65. *For*—as for. *Mutable*—change-able. *Rank-scented many*—foul-smelling multitude (of common people).

Lines 67—68. *Regard me as I do not flatter.........and behold them-selves*—"let them look in the mirror which I hold up to them, a mirror which does not flatter, and see them-selves" (Dr. Johnson).

Line 69. *In soothing them*—in flattering or appeasing them.

Nourish—maintain ; foster.

Line 70. *Cockle*—a common weed which grows among corn, with large red flowers.

Insolence—rude-ness.

Sedition—incitement of re-bellion.

Line 71. *Which we ourselves have plough'd for, sow'd and scattered*—for which we our-selves are responsible.

Line 72. *By mingling them with us*—by allowing them to mix with us.

The honour'd—the honourable. *Number*—class.

The honour'd Number—*i.e.* the Nobility.

Lines 73—74. *But that which they have given to beggars*—except in so far as the Nobility has made it (*i.e.* the power) over to beggars (*i.e.* the common people).

Line 78. *Coin*—invent. *Till their decay*—*i.e.* till my lungs are exhausted. *Measles*—*i.e.* common people who are like measles.

(*Measles*=either leprosy or the disease known by this name).

Line 79. *Disdain*—scorn ; hate. *Tetter*—infect ; cover as with scabs.

Line 80. *To catch them*—to catch measles.

Lines 77—80. *So shall my lungs.........the very way to catch them*—so shall my lungs invent terms of abuse till they are exhausted against the common people, who can be compared to leprosy (or measles), by which we scorn to be infected, but, at the same time, are anxious to catch it.

Line 82. *A man of their infirmity*—a man as weak as they. (*Infirmity*=weakness).

Line 84. *Choler*—anger *i.e.* words said n anger.

Lines 85—86. *Were I as patient as the mid-night sleep ....my mind*—even if I were as calm as sleep in the profound silence of midnight, it would be exactly what I think *i.e.* I would say the same thing.

(*By Jove*=by Jupiter).

Lines 86—88. *It is a mind, that shall remain a poison...... not poison any further*—your mind will not be allowed to do harm to any except to itself.

Line 89. *The Triton of the minnows*—this noisy ruler of the little fishes.

(*Triton*=son of Poseidon, the god of sea. He is supposed to blow a horn (trumpet) at the command of his father, in order to silence the waves of the ocean.

(*Minnows*=a small river fish)

Note. Coriolanus describes Sicinius contemptuously as noisy as Triton and refers to the people, whose rights he protects, as minnows (small fishes).

Line 90. *Absolute*—positive ; dictatorial.

'Twas from the canon—*i.e.* his use of the word 'shall' was contrary to the law of authority.

(*From*=contrary to)

Line 92. *Reckless*—heed-less.

Line 93. *Hydra*—"a serpent with nine heads, one of which was immortal. Hercules burned off the eight mortal heads, and buried the immortal one under a rock."

Note. Coriolanus refers to the common people as Hydra.

To choose—the power to choose.

An officer—*i.e.* a tribune.

Line 94. *Peremptory*—authoritative ; dictatorial.

Line 95. *The horn and noise*—the noisy trumpet.

O' the monster's—of Hydra ; of the common people who are like a Hydra.

Wants not spirit—does not lack courage.

Lines 96—97. *To say he'll turn yaur current in a ditch ......your channel his*—to declare that he will destroy your authority and assume himself the power which belongs to you.

Note. Coriolanus means that just as a river will be destroyed if it was turned aside into a ditch, similarly Sicinius wants to destroy the authority of senators.

Line 98. *Vail your ignorance*—let the ignorance that gave power to him bow down before him.

If none—if he has no power.

Lines 98—99. *Awake your dangerous lenity*—wake up from your dangerous mildness.

(*Lenity*=leniency ; mildness).

If you are learn'd—if you are wise.

Line 101. *Let them have cushions by you*—let them sit in the senate with you ; let them have cushioned seats by your sides in the senate-house.

Lines 101—104. *you are plebeians......most palate theirs*—you are the common people and the common people are the real senators, when the voices of the senators and plebeians being mixed to-gether, the resultant voice is most like theirs (common people's). In other words, their opinion dominates yours.

They choose—*i.e.* the common people choose.

Line 106. *Popular*—based on the will of the people.

Lines 106—107. *Against a graver bench that ever frown'd in Greece*—in opposition to a government more exalted than ever exercised strict rule in Greece.

Line 108. *It makes the consuls base*—such a state of affairs lowers the prestige of consuls.

My soul aches—I am extremely anxious.

Line 109. *Are up*—are up in arms against each other.

Line 110. *Confusion*—ruin.

Line 111. *'Twixt the gap of both*—through the gap between the two authorities.

Lines 111—112. *And take the one by the other*—and destroy one by means of the other.

Line 114 *Gratis*—free of charge. *As 't was used*—as it s the custom.

Line 115. *Sometimes*—at one time.

Line 119. *One*—*i.e.* a person. *Voice*—votes.

Line 120. *More worthier*—(the double comparative is used for the sake of emphasis).

Line 121. *Was not our recompense*—was not a reward given to them by us for any service performed by them. It was only a free gift.

Resting well assured—we were quite conscious (aware).

Line 122. *They ne'er did service for't*—the common people did not do anything to deserve the corn.

Being pressed to the war—when they were forcibly enrolled for the war.

Line 123. *The navel*—*i.e.* the centre. *Was touch'd*—was involved.

Even when the navel of the state was touch'd—even when Rome was confronted with the greatest danger.

Line 124. *They would not thread the gates*—they would not pass out of the gates of Rome (in order to participate in the war).

Mutinies—revolts against lawful authority.

Lines 126–127. *Wherein they show'd most valour*—in which they exhibited the greatest heroism.

Spoke not for them- did not recommend their case.

Line 129. *All cause un-born*—there being no cause for it ; which was base-less.

Native—the natural source.

Line 130. *Of our frank donation*—of such a free gift of corn on our part.

Lines 127–130. *The accusation which they have often made......so frank donation*—the charges which are entirely baseless and which they have so frequently levelled against the senate, could not persuade us to be so generous as to give them corn, free of charge. In other words, we gave them corn of our own accord and not because they deserved it.

Well, what then ?—what was it that induced us to give the corn gratis ?

Line 131. *The bosom multiplied*—the manifold bosoms (of the common people).

Digest—understand.

Line 132. *Courtesy*—kindness.

Lines 132—133. *Let deeds express what's like to be their words*—we can judge their answer to this question by their past actions.

Lines 133—135. *We did request it...they gave us our demands*—the common people will reply : we claimed corn and as we out-number the patricians, they granted it out of nothing, but fear.

(*The greater poll*=the greater number. *True fear*=mere fear; nothing but fear).

Lines 135—137. *Thus we debase the nature of our seats ...cares fears*—in this way we lower our position as rulers and make the dis-orderly crowd say that the care we take of them is owing to fear.

(*De-base*=degrade. *Rabble*=the dis-orderly mob).

Which—a thing which.

In time—in due time.

Line 138. *Break ope*—break open.

Line 139. *The crows*—*i.e.* the common people.

To peck—to strike with the beak.

The eagles—*i.e.*the patricians.

Come—*i.e.* stop.

Line 140. *With over-measure*—more than enough.

Lines 141—142. *What may be sworn by, both divine and human...I end withal*—may everything in heaven and on earth by which we swear confirm my concluding words.

(*What may be sworn by*=*i.e.* what is sacred. *Seal*= confirm. *Withal*=with).

This double worship—this divided authority.

Lines 143—144. *Where one part does dis-dain with cause ...all reason*—where one party justly scorns the other, and the other party insults un-reasonably the first party.

Lines 144—146. *Gentry*—gentle birth *Wisdom*—*i.e.* wise patricians. *Cannot conclude*—cannot make decisions. *Yea*—*yes.*

The General ignorance—the ignorant common people.

Where gentry, title, wisdom...of general ignorance—where

the patricians who are noble, titled and wise cannot make decisions without the consent of ignorant common people.

Lines 146–148. *It*—*i.e.* this double worship (this divided authority).

Omit—neglect. *Real necessities*—matters of importance. *Give way*—yield to. *Unstable slightness*—irresolute trifling.

It must omit...to un-stable slightness—this divided authority must neglect matters of real importance and must, for a time, take up irresolute trifling.

Lines 148–149. *Purpose so barr'd it follows...done to purpose*—a firm purpose in our policy being impossible, nothing is done to solve our real problems.

(*Barr'd*=debarred).

Beseech you—I request you.

Line 150. *You that will be less fearful than dis-creet*—such of you as would like to be cautious rathar than timid.

Line 151. *That love the fundamental part of the state*—such of you as love the basic principles on which the welfare of the state is founded.

Line 152. *More than you doubt the change on't*—more than you fear the change of it.

(*Change*=revolution).

(*Doubt*=fear. *On't*=of it).

Lines 152–153. *That prefer a noble life before a long*—who prefer a noble life to a long one.

Line 154. *Jump*—risk ; expose to risk.

Dangerous physic—dangerous medicine (here, abolition of the office of tribunes).

Line 155. *Multitudinous tongue*—*i.e.* the mob which has the right to elect tribunes who are its mouth-pieces.

Lines 153–156. *And wish to jump a body...the multitudinous tongue*—and desire to expose to risk the body to a dangerous medicine, that is certain to die without it (*i e.* medicine), you should withdraw from the mob the right to elect tribunes, who are their mouth-pieces.

(Coriolanus suggests that the senators should abolish tribunate, if they want to survive).

Lines 157—158. *Let them not lick the sweet which is their poison*—let the common people not enjoy a pleasant thing which will ultimately bring about their ruin.

Your dis-honour—the insult done to you.

Line 158. *Mangles*—crripples. *Bereaves*—deprives.

Line 159. *Integrity*—sound-ness.

Which should become't—which should be worthy of it.

Line 160. *Not having*—*i.e.* the state not having.

Line 161. *For*—in consequence of. *Control 't*—limit it.

Lines 157—161. *Your dis-honour mangles true judgment ......doth control 't*—the insult done to you cripples your power of forming correct judgment and deprives the state of that sound government which should be worthy of it. The state lacks the power of doing good, that it would like to do, because it is prevented by the evil restraints under which it now finds itself.

Has said—he has said.

Line 162. *And shall answer*—and shall pay the penalty.

Line 164. *Wretch*—contemptible person.

Despite—malice; contempt.

Line 165. *What should the people do with these bald tribunes*—what good can the people deserve from these old fools, the tribunes.

(*Bald=senseless*)

Line 166. *On whom depending*—trusting to whom, *Their obedience* *i.e.* loyalty of the people.

Line 167. *Greater bench*—*i.e.* the senate.

Lines 166—167. *On whom depending..... to the greater bench*—by trusting to whom, the people fail in their obedience to the senate.

Line 168. *When what's not meet. but what must be was law*—when what was necessary and not what was proper, prevailed.

(*What 's not meet*=not what's meet. *Meet*==proper).

In a better hour—in a happier time.

Line 170. *Let what is meet be said it must be meet*—let what is proper be declared to be necessary as well as proper.

Line 171. *And throw their power i' the dust*—i e. abolish the tribunate.

Manifest—open ; plain.

Treason—violation of the allegiance due to a state.

Line 173. *Aediles*—officers who assisted the tribunes in arresting the criminals or inflicting the death penalty.

Let him be apprehended—let Coriolanus be seized.

Line 175. *Attach thee*—arrest you.

Innovator—one who introduces a change for the worse.

Line 177. *And follow to thine answer*—and answer the charge against you and pay the penalty.

Hence—go away from here. *Old goat*—(this is said in contempt. The tribune is referred to as a goat, because he has a beard).

Line 178. *We'll surety him*—we will stand surety for him.

Line 179. *Rotten thing*—you weak, contemptible person.

Stage Direction—*Rabble.* dis-orderly crowd ; mob.

Line 181. *On both sides more respect*—both Coriolanus and the tribunes should show more courtesy, than they have shown so far, to each other.

Stage Direction. *Bustle*—to be fussily busy.

Line 189. *What is about to be*—what is going to happen.

Line 190. *Confusion*—utter ruin.

Lines 190—191. *You, tribunes, to the people !*—you tribunes ! go to the people and speak to them.

Line 194. *At a point*—on the point of.

Line 195. *Would have all from you*—would deprive you of all your power.

Line 196. *Fie*—shame.

Line 197. *To kindle*—to incite; to instigate.

To quench—to pacify.

Line 198. *To un-build*—to destroy. *To lay all flat*—to strew the city in ruins.

Line 203. *Are like to*—are likely to.

Line 204. *To lay the city flat*—to strew the city in ruins.

Line 206. *Which yet distinctly ranges*—which stands distinct and in orderly arrangement.

Line 207. *Piles*—heaps.

Line 208. *Or*—either.

Stand to—defend; assert and maintain.

Line 210. *In whose power*—by the exercise of whose power.

Line 211. *Theirs*—their representatives.

Lines 211—212. *Is worthy of present death*—deserves immediate death.

Line 213. *Rock Tarpeian*—a part of the Capitoline Hill, down which traitors were thrown.

From thence—from that place.

Line 216. *Beseech you*—I request you. *A word*—one word.

Line 218. *Be that you seem*—be in reality what you seem to be.

Line 219. *Temperately*—moderately.

Line 220. *Redress*—set right.

Cold ways—calm methods.

Line 221. *Prudent helps*—remedies suggested by cautious wisdom.

Lines 224—225. *There's some among you have beheld ......what you have seen me*—there are some among you who have seen me fighting; come and test personally what sort of man I am in the fighting mood.

Line 230. *Get you to your house*—(This is addressed to Coriolanus, who is advised to go home).

Line 231. *All will be naught else*—all will he lost other-wise.

(*Will be naught*=will be ruined).

Line 233. *Shall it be put to that*—do you suggest that it shall be a trial of strength.

Line 235. *Leave us to cure this cause*—allow us to heal this quarrel.

(*Cause*=quarrel).

Line 236. *Tent*—probe.

Line 237. *Along with us*—come along with us.

Line 238. *Barbarians*—savage foreigners.

As they are—and indeed they are no better than barbarians.

Line 239. *Litter'd*—brought forth at one birth like animals.

Line 240. *Calved*—*i.e.* born like a calf.

Porch—covered approach to a door-way.

Line 241. *Worthy rage*—well-founded anger. *Put not your worthy rage into your tongue*—do not express your well-founded anger.

Line 242. *One time will owe another*—the time will come when we shall have retribution.

Line 244. *Take up*—cope with.

A brace—a couple.

Line 245. *But now 'tis odds beyond arithmetic*—the odds against us are incalculable.

Lines 246–247. *And manhood is call'd foolery......a falling fabric*—It is not courage but foolhardiness when a man opposes his strength to a building that is about to fall.

(*Fabric*=building).

Will you hence—will you go away from here.

Line 248. *Tag*—the dis-orderly mob.

Rage—anger.

Line 249. *Interrupted waters*—waters suddenly obstructed or dammed.

O'erbear—sweep away.

Line 250. *What they are used to bear*—ship etc. which these waters were accustomed to bear on their current.

Lines 248—250. *Whose rage doth rend......they are used to bear*—the people's anger is as destructive as waters, that are suddenly obstructed and which sweep away ships etc. that they were accustomed to bear on their current.

Line 251. *Wit*—good sense. *Be in request*—is likely to be of use ; can avail.

Line 252. *With those that have but little*—with those persons who have only little good sense.

Lines 252—253. *This must be patch'd......any colour*—this quarrel must be mended some how or other *i.e.* with whatever arguments.

(*Patch'd*=mended)

Note. The metaphor is from a hole in a cloth which is mended with a piece of another cloth.

Line 254. *This man*—*i.e.* Coriolanus. *Has marr'd*—has spoilt.

Line 255. *His nature is too noble for the world*—He is too noble to be worldly-minded.

Line 256. *Neptune*—the god of sea. *For*—in order to obtain. *Trident*—the three-pronged sceptre held by Neptune.

Line 257. *Jove*—Jupiter, the president of Roman gods. *For's*—for his *His heart 's his mouth*—he speaks what he thinks.

Line 258. *What his breast forges*—what he thinks.

That his tongue must vent—that his tongue must utter.

(*Vent*=let out).

Lines 259—260. *And being angry......the name of death*—when he is angry, he grows absolutely fearless.

(*Does forget*=he does forget).

Lines 255—260. *His nature is too noble for the world...* *...he heard the name of death*—Coriolanus is so noble that he cannot be worldly-wise. He hates flattery so much that he would not flatter even Neptune, the god of sea, in order to

obtain the three-pronged sceptre held by the latter. Nor would he flatter Jupiter, the president of Roman gods, in order to gain his power to thunder. He says just what he thinks. Whatever he feels, his tongue gives utterance to it ; and when he is angry, he grows absolutely fearless.

Line 261. *Here's goodly work*—here is a strange state of affairs !

Were abed—were in bed.

Line 262. *Tiber—i.e.* the river (Tiber).

Lines 262—263. *What the vengeance, could he not speak'em fair*—Menenius, now, finds fault with Coriolanus. Menenius feels that Coriolanus was very harsh to the people.

Where is this viper—(Coriolanus is called a viper because the latter preys upon its mother. Like a viper, Coriolanus is preying upon his mother *i.e.* Rome).

Viper=a poisonous snake ; a malignant or treacherous person.

Line 264. *Depopulate*=reduce the population of.

Line 265. *Be every man himself*—assume all power himself.

Line 267. *Rigorous*—strict ; austere.

Line 268. *Scorn him*—scorn to allow him.

Line 269. *Than the severity of the public power*—the severest punishment that the state can inflict.

Line 270. *Which he sets at nought*—which he holds in scorn and defies.

Lines 268—270. *And therefore law shall scorn him further trial......sets at nought*—and therefore law shall scorn to allow him any further trial than the severest punishment which the power of people, which he despises and defies, can inflict on him.

Line 271. *People's mouths*—mouthpieces of the common people ; representatives of the plebeians.

Line 272. *And we their hands*—and we are the physical instruments of the Tribunes.

Sure on't—you may be sure of that.

Line 275. *Cry havoc*—(it was a signal for general slaughter in a battle).

Lines 275—276. *Hunt with modest warrant*—hunt with authority tempered with moderation.

How comes't—i.e. how do you explain.

Line 277. *Holp*—helped.

Lines 278—279. *As I do know the consul's worthiness... ...his faults*—I am as aware of the virtues of Coriolanus as of his faults (weaknesses).

Line 282. *Leave*—permission.

Line 283. *Crave*—earnestly beg.

Line 284. *The which—i.e.* the few words I am going to utter. *Shall turn you to*—shall put you to.

Line 286. *We are peremptory*—we are firmly determined. *Dispatch*—kill.

Line 287. *This viperous traitor*—this traitor who is poisonous as a viper.

Eject him hence—i. e. to banish him from Rome.

Line 288. *Were but our danger*—would be a danger to us.

Keep him here—i. e. to allow him to remain in Rome.

Line 289. *Decreed*—ordered.

Line 291. *Renowned*—famous ; celebrated.

Line. 292. *Deserved children*—deserving sons. *Is enroll'd*—is recorded.

Line 293. *In Jove's own book*—in the book kept in heaven.

Note. It has been conjectured that Shakespeare, here, refers to the "book of life" which is mentioned in Revelations XX 12, 15.

Dam—mother.

Line 294. *Should now eat up her own*—should now eat up her own young ones.

Lines 291—294. *That our re-nowned Rome, whose gratitude.........should now eat up her own*—that our celebrated Rome, whose sense of gratefulness towards her deserving sons is recorded in the book of life, should now start eating up her own children like an un-natural mother who feeds on her own young ones.

Line 296. *He's a limb*—he is an important part.

Line 297. *Mortal*—fatal.

Mortal to cut it off—it would be fatal to the body to cut this important limb off (*i. e.* it would be disastrous for Rome to kill Coriolanus).

Line 298. *Worthy death*——worthy of death ; deserving death.

Line 299. *Killing our enemies*—while killing our enemies.

Line 300. *Vouch*—attest or warrant to be true.

He hath—*i. e.* he has left in his body.

Line 301. *Dropp'd*—shed.

Line 302. *By his country*—at the hand of his country.

Line 303. *Were to us all*—would be to us all.

Suffer it—permit it.

Line 304. *A brand*—a mark of shame.

This is clean kam—this is altogether crooked.

Line 305. *Merely away*—absolutely crooked; entirely off the point.

Line 307. *Once gangrened*—once mortified.

Line 308. *For what before it was*—for service rendered by it in former days.

Line 309. *Pluck him*—drag him.

Line 310 *His infection*—the disease with which he is infected.

Being of catching nature—being infectious.

Line 312. *This tiger footed rage*—this anger that leaps with the swift speed of a tiger.

Lines 312-313. *When it shall find the harm of un-scann'd swiftness*—when it will discover the mischief that comes of unconsidered haste.

(*Harm*=mischief. *Un-scann'd swiftness*=inconsiderate haste).

Line 314. *Tie leaden pounds to's heels*—tie leaden weights to his heels (*i.e.* curb or restrain itself).

To's=to his.

Proceed by process—proceed by regular legal procedure.

Line 315. *Parties*—factions. *As he is beloved*—he being so beloved.

Line 316. *With Romans*—through or by means of Romans.

Line 317. *What do ye talk*—Why do your talk ?

Line 318. *Taste*—experience.

Line 319. *Smote*—smitten ; struck with a hard blow.

Line 220. *Bred*—brought up.

Line 322. *Bolted language*—carefully chosen language. (*Bolted*=sifted ; refined).

Meal and bran—kernel and husk ; good words and bad words.

Lines 322-323. *Meal and bran to-gether he throws without distinction*—he uses good and bad words indiscriminately.

Line 325. *Answer*—*i. e.* defend himself.

Line 326. *To his utmost peril*—it may mean either (*i*) exposed to the greatest danger or (*ii*) against the most dangerous charges.

Line 327. *Humane way*—gentle way.

Lines 327—28. *And the end of it unknown to the beginning*—there is no knowing where such a beginning will end.

Line 332. *Attend you*—await you.

Line 334. *In our first way*—as we at first intended.

Line 336. *Let's to him*—let us go to him.

Act III, Scene II

I. Summary of the Scene :

This scene takes place at Coriolanus' house. Coriolanus tells the Patricians that he would prefer the most painful death rather than flatter the common people. He wonders why his mother who used to hold the common people in contempt, does not approve whole heartedly of his action.

Volumnia enters the room and Coriolanus asks her whether she would like him to be untrue to his essential nature.

She tells him that he should not have been so rash with the people. He retorts that he does not care at all for them.

Menenius and the Senators arrive at Coriolanus' house. Menenius says that Coriolanus has been somewhat too rough and that he must return to the market-place and mend matters. One of the senators suggests that if Coriolanus does not appease the people, there would be a civil war in Rome.

Volumnia persuades her son to heed good advice and not to misuse his anger. Coriolanus wants to know what he should do. He is told that he must return to the tribunes and express regret for his harsh words. Coriolanus stubbornly rejects this suggestion.

Volumnia advances a new argument. She says that Coriolanus approves of combining honour and craft in war ; he should not hesitate to combine them in peace. Coriolanus does not approve of this idea too. He wishes to know why she insists upon his combining humour and craft. She informs him that it is now incumbent on him to honour the people. She further advises him to pretend humility and politeness, in order to win the good opinion of the plebeians. She suggests that she would act contrary to her nature, if she felt that she could save thereby her fortunes and friends. She tauntingly adds that when his wife, mother and son and all the senators are involved, he would exhibit (show) his anger to the common people, rather than flatter them a little.

Volumnia advises him to go to the people with a hat in his hand and after saluting them ask their pardon, and promise to be their friend in the future.

Menenius approves of Volumnia's suggestion. At this point Cominius enters and informs Coriolanus that the people are very excited and angry, at the market-place. He (Cominius) suggests that Coriolanus can pacify the people by being humble and polite. Volumnia says that Coriolanus will certainly do so. The latter declares that she is asking him to play a part which he will never be able to perform in a life-like manner. She asks him once again to abide by her advice.

Coriolanus, however, announces that he will never like to be a pretender and debase himself, by being false to his true nature.

Volumnia loses her temper and gives him up for lost. She tells him to do as he likes. She adds that she would like to put up with his refusal to do as she wishes, rather than fear the consequences that his dangerous obstinacy will bring. She says further that he inherits his valour from her, but his pride is his own.

Coriolanus, now, agrees to go to the market-place and play the pretender to win the favour of the people, Volumnia leaves the room in anger, saying that he might do as he pleases.

Cominius advises Coriolanus to be gentle and mild while defending himself against the charges, at the market-place. Coriolanus promises to be mild.

II. Main Events in the Scene.

1. Coriolanus tells the patricians that he would not humble himself before the people.
2. Volumnia advises Coriolanus to go to the people and express regret for his words.
3. She says further that he should combine honour and craft in peace.
4. Coriolanus does not approve of this suggestion.
5. Volumnia says that she would act, contrary to her nature, if her fortunes and friends were involved.
6. Menenius supports Volumnia.
7. Cominius arrives there and declares that people are very angry and excited, and that Coriolanus must pacify them, by being humble and polite.
8. Coriolanus declares that he will never play the part of a pretender, in order to win the favour of the people.
9. Volumnia loses her temper and resigns herself to the situation. She says that Coriolanus inherits his valour from her, but his pride is his own.
10. Coriolanus decides to go to the market-place and act like a pretender.
11. Cominius advises Coriolanus to defend himself in a gentle and mild manner.
12. Coriolanus promises to be mild.

III. Dramatic Significance of the Scene :

This scene depicts the first serious clash between Coriolanus and Volumnia. It reveals how Coriolanus refuses stubbornly to be false to his essential nature, and how his ambitious mother wants him to compromise himself, by combining sense of honour with craft. Volumnia's manifest opportunism heightens by contrast her son's unqualified idealism.

Ultimately, Volumnia scores a victory though not through argument, but by a personal entreaty. Coriolanus relaxes for a moment only to lapse again into his stubborn-ness. Volumnia plays her trump card by treating him to a fit of anger. This stratagem (trick) breaks his resistance and he is ultimately tamed.

This scene suggests that whereas pride and choler are the fatal flaws in Coriolanus' character, ambition is the fatal weakness in that of Volumnia. For the sake of fulfilling her ambition—that is to see her son a Consul—she sacrifices all moral scruples, and calls upon her son to flatter abjectly the common people, whom she always has been holding in contempt. This sudden change in her attitude surprises as much Coriolanus as it does the spectators.

This scene enables us to compare and contrast the two strong characters of Volumnia and Coriolanus. It proves that Volumnia is practical-minded, worldly-wise and diplomatic, whereas Coriolanus is idealistic and other-worldly. At the same time, it shows that Coriolanus is "proof against his mother's arguments, but not against affection and the bond of nature."

Again, this scene reveals what a tremendous influence his mother exercises on Coriolanus. She flatters or chides him like a child, and ultimately gives him up for lost, in order to win him over. Incidentally, this scene hints that Coriolanus has the makings of a tragic figure. He is placed in the midst of circumstances that require him to make a particular choice ; but his character is such, that this choice cannot be made.

Commenting on this aspect of Coriolanus' character Granville Barker observes, "The invincible (un-conquerable) soldier. Vulnerable (conquerable) in the simplicity of his affections. Pure patriot ! As a politician, a fool !"

IV. Shakespeare's debt to North's Plutarch.

This scene is Shakespeare's invention. He does not owe anything to North's Plutarch.

Line 1. *Let them pull all about mine ears*—let the common people bring ruin down upon me.

Present me—place before me.

Line 2. *Death on the wheel*—(a mode of torture in the Middle Ages. The victim was bound to a wheel and beaten to death with an iron bar, or the wheel was swiftly turned down).

At wild horses' heels—(a cruel mode of execution in which the limbs of a victim were attached to two chariots, which were then driven in different directions).

Line 3. *Pile*=heap.

Line 4. *Precipitation*—precipitatiousness.

Lines 4—5. *That the precipitation might down stretch... ...beam of sight*—'that the space through which I should fall might extend further down than the eye could pierce.'

Still—always.

Line 6. *Be thus to them*—i.e. be proud and unyielding to them.

The nobler—i.e. more nobly.

Line 7. *I muse*—I wonder.

Line 9. *Does not approve me further*—does not more fully approve of my behaviour towards the people.

Was wont—was accustomed.

Line 10. *To call them*—to describe the people as.

Woollen vassals—slaves dressed in coarse garments.

Lines 10—11. *Things created to buy and sell with groats*—fellows whose trade was confined to a few pence.

(*Groat*=a four-penny piece).

To show bare heads—to stand bare-headed.

Line 12. *Congregations*—public assemblies.

Line 13. *One but*—but one.

(*But*=only).

Ordinance—rank.

Lines 15—16. *Rather say I play the man I am*—instead of reproaching me, you should rather say that my behaviour is worthy of me.

Lines 17—18. *I would have had you put your power well on .....worn it out*—I should have desired that you had grown accustomed to your power as Consul, before you used it so roughly, as to ruin it.

Note. The metaphor is from putting on a garment and soon wearing it out by rough usage.

Let go—never mind ; let it go.

Lines 20—21. *You might have been enough the man you are......less to be so*—you might have well enough exhibited your real character, if you had asserted yourself less publicly.

Lesser—less.

Line 22. *Thwartings of your dispositions*—opposition to your inclinations.

Line 23. *How ye were disposed*—how you were inclined.

Line 24. *Ere they lack'd power to cross you*—till they no longer had power to thwart you.

Line 25. *Something*—somewhat.

Line 26. *Mend it*—mend matters.

There's no remedy—there is no help for it.

Line 27. *Unless*—*i.e.* unless you return and put matters right.

But not so doing—if it is not done.

Lines 27—28. *Our good city cleave in the midst and perish*—*i.e.* Rome would split and be ruined.

(*Cleave*=split).

Line 29. *Be counsell'd*—listen to sound counsel (advice)

Lines 30—32. *I have a heart as little apt as yours...... to better advantage*—my heart is as little docile as yours, but my brain prompts me to turn my anger to better account.

(*Apt*=docile).

Line 33. *Stoop to the herd*—lower himself so as to humour the common people.

But that—were it not that.

Line 34. *The violent fit o' the times—i.e.* the present dis-turbances.

Craves it—calls upon him to do.

Lines 34—35. *As physic for the whole state*—as a medicine for Rome.

Lines 33—36. *Before he should thus stoop to the herd, but that......which I can scarcely bear*. Menenius means that he will put on his heavy armour and fight rather than see Coriolanus lower himself to win the good opinion of the common people, were it not that the present disturbance calls upon him to do so for the welfare of Rome.

Line 38. *Repent*—express your regret.

What you have spoke—words spoken by you.

(*Spoke*=spoken).

Line 39. *For them—i.e.* for the sake of common people. *I cannot do it to the gods*—I cannot express regret even to the gods.

Line 40. *Do't*—do it *i.e.* express regrets.

Too absolute—too obstinate ; too uncompromising.

Lines 41—42. *Though therein you can never be too noble*—'you cannot show nobility more than by being firm.'

But when extremities speak—except when a critical situation demands compromise.

(*But*=except. *Extremities*=a crisis).

Line 43. *Policy*—cunning ; craft ; stratagem. *Un-sever'd friends*—inseparable friends.

Line 44 *I' the war do grow to-gether*—prosper hand in hand in the war.

Grant—admit.

Lines 45—46. *In peace what each of them by the other lose.........not there*—what injury can honour and policy do to each other in peace, so that they cannot combine.

Note. Volumnia means that if Coriolanus justifies the combination of honour and cunning in war, he should not dis-approve of combining them in times of peace.

Tush—(a word showing mild reproach).

A good demand—a fair question.

Line 47. *If it be honour*—if it is an honourable thing.

Line 48. *The same you are not*—the thing you are not.

For your best ends—to suit you purpose best.

Line 49. *You adopt*—you adopt as. *Less or worse*—less honourable or more ignoble.

Line 50. *That it*—that policy. *Shall hold companionship*—shall be the companion of.

Line 52. *It stands in like request*—it is equally profitable.

Force you—urge you.

(*Force*=enforce).

Line 53. *Now it lies you on*—now it is incumbent on you; now you are bound.

(*You on*=on you).

Line 54. *Not by your own instruction*—not in accordance with the bidding of your own conscience.

Line 55. *Prompts you*—urges you to use.

Line 56. *Roted in*—memorized ; learnt by rote.

(*Rote*=with constant repetition).

Lines 57—58. *Though but bastards and syllables......... bosom's truth*- though not accepted by true heart as its legitimate off-spring. (In other words, though the words which you will utter would not be the genuine expression of your mind and would not be recognised by you as being so).

Syllables—words. *Allowance*=acceptance.

Line 60. *Take in*—capture. *With*—by.

Lines 61—62. *Which else would put you to your fortune and.........much blood*—which otherwise will compel you to risk the fortune of war and the spilling of much blood.

(*Hazard*=risk).

Line 63. *I would dissemble with my nature*—I would conceal my real nature.

Where—in a case in which.

Line 64. *At stake*—in danger.

Line 65. *I should do so in honour—i.e.* I would conceal my real nature, within the bounds of honour.

I am in this—I am involved in this.

Line 66. *Your wife, your son, these senators the nobles*—in the same manner, your wife, your son and these senators and nobles are involved in this.

Line 67. *And you will rather*—and you would prefer. *Louts*—clownish fellows (i.e. the common people).

Line 68. *You can frown*—you can be angry. *Spend a fawn*—offer them a little flattery.

Line 69. *In-heritance*—possession.

Line 70. *That want*—the want of that (i.e. their loves).

Lines 67—70. *And you will rather show our general louts......of what that want might ruin*—you prefer to show our clownish fellows, the common people, how you can be angry rather than how you can offer them a little flattery, and thereby possess their love and ensure safety to Rome which, in the absence of their love, is likely to be ruined.

Line 71. *Come*—(this is addressed to Coriolanus and not Volumnia).

Speak fair—speak gently. *Salve*—make good.

Line 72. *Not*—not only.

What is dangerous present—the danger of the present time.

Lines 72—73. *But the loss of what is past*—but regain what has been lost in the past.

Prithee—I pray you ; I request you.

Line 74. *This bonnet*—this cap.

Line 75. *Stretch'd it*—held it out.

Here be with them—at this point salute them with a courteous gesture.

Line 76. *Bussing*—kissing ; touching lightly.

Line 77. *Action is eloquence*—action expresses your feelings more eloquently than speech.

Lines 77—78. *The eyes of the ignorant more learned than the ears*—the eyes of the ignorant people are better able to understand than their ears.

Lines 79—81. *Waving thy head*—bowing your head. *Which often, thus, correcting thy stout heart......that will not hold the handling*—you should repeatedly bow your head to

them. The process of repetition will enable you to correct your proud heart and it will become as tender as a ripe mulberry tree, so ripe that it cannot be fingered.

Line 82. *Bred*—brought up. *Broils*—combats.

Lines 84—85. *Were fit for thee to use as they to claim*—would be proper for you to employ and proper for them to demand.

(*As they*=as for them).

Line 86. *Good loves*--good opinion.

Thou wilt frame—you will train ; you will discipline.

Line 87. *Forsooth*—in truth. *Hereafter*—for the future. *Theirs*—their faithful servant.

Line 88. *As thou hast power and person*—as your personal qualities fit you (to be their faithful servant).

This but done—if only this is done.

Even as she speaks—i. e. in a moment.

Their hearts were yours—you will win their hearts.

Lines 89—90. *For they have pardons, being ask'd, as free ......to little purpose*—because they are as liberal in forgiving an offender as in their foolish talk.

(*Words to little purpose*=aimless talk).

Prithee—I pray you.

Line 91. *Be ruled*—submit to this advice.

Line 92. *In a fiery gulf*—into an abyss of fire.

Line 93. *Bower*—a drawing room.

Line 94. *'Tis fit*—it is necessary.

Line 95. *You make strong party*—you take powerful supporters.

Lines 95—96. *Or defend yourself by calmness or by absence*—or protect yourself by remaining calm, if you go, or by not going there at all.

All's in anger—anger has over-powered everything.

Line 97. *Only fair speech*—only the use of gentle words will help you.

'Twill serve—it will serve the purpose.

Line 98. *Frame his spirit*—discipline or train his spirit.

Line 100. *Unbarb'd sconce*—bare head ; un-protected head.

Note. The word barbed or barded is applied to a war-horse protected by an armour.

Lines 100—102. *Must I with my base tongue give to my noble heart......bear*—must I be false to my real feelings, and must my heart agree to this fact.

Line 103. *This single plot*—i. e. my own body only.

Note. Coriolanus refers to his "body" as a single plot of ground.

Line 104. *This mould*—this bodily frame.

Of—consisting of.

Lines 103—105. *Yet, were there but this single plot to lose......the wind.* Coriolanus suggests that if he was the only person involved, he would not have cared to appease the common people. He would have preferred death to humouring the mob. But he has to flatter the people, because the entire Roman state is involved.

Line 106. *Put me*—compelled me.

Line 107. *Discharge to the life*—perform in a life-like manner.

Lines 106—107. *You have put me now to such a part which never......to the life*—using a metaphor from the theatre, Coriolanus says that they have forced him to play a part which he shall never perform in a life-like manner.

Prompt—remind an actor of his lines.

Line 108. *I prithee*—I pray you.

Line 110. *To have*—in order to have.

Line 111. *That hast not done before*—that you have not performed before.

(*That hast*=that thou hast).

Line 112. *My disposition*—my natural temper of mind.

Lines 112—113. *And possess me some woman's spirit*—and may some woman's spirit possess me ; and may I be animated by some woman's spirit.

My throat of war—my war-like voice ; my thundering voice.

Line 114. *Which quired with my drum*—which sounded in harmony with the military drum.

(*Quired with*=harmonized with).

Line 115. *Small as an eunuch's*- as shrill as the voice of an eunuch.

(*Eunuch*=a castrated man).

The virgin voice—voice of a maiden.

Line 116. *That babies lulls asleep*—that soothes babies off to sleep.

Knaves—rescals ; rogues.

Line 117. *Tent*—encamp ; lodge as in a tent.

Line 118. *The glasses of my sight*—my eye-balls ; my eyes. (*Glasses*=lenses).

Lines 118—119. *A beggar's tongue make motion through my lips*—i. e. I should speak like a beggar.

Line 120. *Who*—which. *But in*—only in.

Line 121. *Alms*—anything bestowed in charity.

Lines 112—121. *Away, my disposition, and possess me*.. ......*that hath received an alms.* Farewell ! my natural temper of mind. May some woman's spirit possess me. May my war-like voice which harmonised with the sound of the drum, turn into a voice as shrill as that of eunuch, or as soft as that of a maiden, that soothes babies off to sleep. May the smiles of rogues reside in my cheeks and school-boys' tears fill my eyes. May I speak as humbly as a beggar, and may my armed knee which bows only in my stirrup, bend like that of a person, who has received charity.

Line. 122. *Surcease*—cease.

Line 124. *A most inherent baseness*—a baseness that may inhere in it ; a baseness that may stick to it.

At thy choice—i. e. let it be as you please.

Lines 125—126. *To beg of thee, it is my more dis-honour than thou of them*—to beg of you is a greater dis-honour to me than it would be for you to beg of the people.

(*More dis-honour*=greater dis-honour).

Come all to ruin—let all come to ruin.

Lines 126—128—*Let thy mother rather feel thy pride than fear thy dangerous stoutness*—I would rather put up with the consequence of your pride (*i. e.* your un-willingness to obey me) than be afraid of the consequences of your dangerous stubbornness.

Note. Volumnia means that she can bear with her son's obstinate pride ; but she does not at all fear the dangerous consequences that her son's stubbornness might bring.

I mock at death—I laugh at death ; I hold death in contempt.

Line 129. *Do as thou list*—do as you please.

Line 130. *Thy valiant-ness was mine*—you inherited your valour from me.

Line 131. *But owe thy pride thyself*—but your pride is your own.

(*Owe*=possess ; own).

Be content—say no more.

Line 133. *Chide*—reprove ; reproach ; censure.

I'll mountebank their love—I will employ the tricks of a mountebank to win their favour.

(*Mountebank*=a charlatan ; a quack ; a pretender).

Line 134. *Cog* –cheat.

Cog their hearts from them—cheat them out of their love.

Line 135. *Of all the trades*—*i. e.* those engaged in all the trades.

Line 136. *Commend me to my wife*—*i. e.* remember me to my wife.

Line 138. *Further*—(it qualifies the word 'trust' in the previous line).

Do your will—do, as you please.

Line 139. *Attend you*—wait for you.

Arm yourself—prepare yourself.

Line 142. *Are upon you yet*—have, so far, been brought against you.

The word—the watch-word.

Line 143. *By invention*—of crimes which they might invent.

Lines 143—144. *I will answer in mine honour*—I will answer their charges in consciousness of honourable innocence ; I will answer their charges in accordance with the dictates of my honour.

Act III, Scene III

1. Summary of the scene :—

This scene takes place at the Forum. Brutus and Sicinius plan to-gether how to impeach Coriolanus. The former suggests that Coriolanus should first be accused of aiming at tyrannical power, then of malice towards the people and lastly of not distributing the spoils of war taken from the Antiates among them.

Sicinius asks an Aedile to collect the people immediately there and to instruct them to confirm by shouting : it shall be so, whatever sentence the tribunes happen to pronounce upon Coriolanus. The Aedile departs. Brutus observes that they should rouse Coriolanus to anger immediately, because once he (Coriolanus) loses his temper, he cannot regain self-control.

Coriolanus, Menenius, Cominius, the Senators and the Patricians now enter the Forum. Menenius advises Coriolanus to remain calm. The latter promises to be as humble as a stable-boy.

The Aedile, accompanied by the citizens, enters. Coriolanus wishes to speak first. He inquires whether the business of charging him will end with the present trial. Sicinius inform him that if the latter submits himself to the people's voices, acknowledges their officers and is content to suffer blame according to law, he shall be charged no more.

Coriolanus replies that he agrees to these conditions.

Menenius expresses his satisfaction at Coriolanus' answer. He reminds the people of Coriolanus' services to Rome and of the wounds on his body. Coriolanus does not wish to be flattered. He deliberately under-rates his wounds. Menenius further asks the citizens not to confuse Coriolanus' roughness with malice.

Coriolanus now wants to know why after electing him consul unanimously, the people have revoked the election.

Sicinius informs him that the latter has plotted to abolish office established by law and has tried to become a tyrant, thereby proving a traitor to the people.

Coriolanus flares up at the mention of the word traitor. Throwing all restraints to the winds, he curses Sicinius and tells him that he is a liar. Sicinius asks the people to notice Coriolanus' behaviour. They shout that Coriolanus must be thrown down from the Tarpeian rock.

Sicinius tells the citizens that Coriolanus' present behaviour and his past actions are clear proofs that he deserves death. Brutus wants to suggest that Coriolanus must be given some concession for his services to Rome. Coriolanus objects to Brutus's reference to the former's services. Menenius and Cominius remind Coriolanus of his promise to behave mildly. Coriolanus refuses to abide by his previous promise. He says that he would not mind being sentenced to any form of punishment, be it death, exile or imprisonment with starvation. Further, that he would not buy the mercy of the people at the expense of one flattering word.

Sicinius now charges him with malice towards the people and with defiance of the tribunes and pronounces the judgment, banishing him from Rome. He warns Coriolanus that if the latter tries to re-enter the gates of Rome, he will be thrown down from the steep Tarpeian rock. The citizens confirm this sentence by shouting unanimously : it shall be so.

Cominius tries to intervene but the tribunes refuse to listen to him. Brutus repeats that Coriolanus is an enemy of the people and that he is banished from Rome. The citizens once again shout : it shall be so.

Coriolanus, in an angry out-brust, refers to the people as a base pack of hounds. He observes that he holds them in utter contempt and that it is not they who have banished him, rather it is he who has banished them from his presence. He wishes them joy of their power to banish their defenders and suggests that they are their own enemies and that they will discover that they are stupid and ignorant, when it is too late. He predicts that without lifting a hand in self-defence, they will find themselves conquered and subdued to a state of abject slavery.

Coriolanus, Cominius, Menenius, the Senators and the Patricians, now, depart. The citizens feel overjoyed that their enemy is banished. They all shout and throw up their caps. Sicinius asks them to meet Coriolanus at the gates and taunt and annoy him. He further wishes a guard to accompany him, lest he should be attacked by the supporters of Coriolanus. The citizens go to see Coriolanus out at the gates of Rome.

II. Main events in the Scene :

1. Brutus and Sicinius conspire to impeach Coriolanus.
2. Sicinius asks an Aedile to collect the people and instruct them to confirm any sentence pronounced by the Tribunes.
3. Soon Coriolanus arrives there and wishes to know why the people have revoked the election.
4. Sicinius informs Coriolanus that the latter has plotted to abolish the office of the Tribunes and has tried to become a tyrant, and that thereby he has proved a traitor to the people.
5. Coriolanus flares up when he is called a traitor and calls Sicinius a liar.
6. Sicinius asks the people to mark Coriolanus' behaviour.
7. They suggest that he must be thrown down from the Tarpeian rock.
8. Sicinius suggests that Coriolanus deserve death for his past and present offences.
9. Brutus observes that Coriolanus should be given some concession for the latter's services to Rome.
10. Coriolanus objects to Brutus's pleading his cause.
11. Sicinius pronounces the sentence, banishing Coriolanus from Rome.
12. The people unanimously approve of the sentence.
13. Cominius tries to intervene but the tribunes refuse to listen to him.
14. Coriolanus curses the people and remarks that it is not they who have banished him, rather it is he who banishes them from his presence. He predicts that

in his absence, they will fall an easy prey to an invader.

15. He, then, leaves the Forum.
16. Sicinius asks the people to go and taunt and annoy Coriolanus.

III. Dramatic significance of the Scene :—

This is one of the most dramatic scenes in the play. In fact, it constitutes what is known as the *Crisis* in the dramatic structure. Here the opposing forces come into a close clash with each other and the rising action gradually leads to the climax of the play.

Coriolanus is impeached by the tribunes and is sentenced to banishment. He easily falls into the trap that Brutus and Sicinius cleverly lay for him. He allows himself to be provoked into a fit of wrath (anger) throwing all restraints to the winds. Once his anger is roused, he is unable to regain self-control. His uncontrollable choler proves his doom. He grows more and more wild and neither Menenius nor Cominius can turn him from his defiant wrath.

This scene besides furthering the plot throws light on the character of Coriolanus as well as that of the two Tribunes. Coriolanus' fatal weaknesses—his choler and his pride—are brought home to us, in a vivid and striking manner. The supreme contempt in which he holds the people is also clearly discernible. As he takes leave of them, he exclaims :

You common cry of curs ! whose breath I hate
As reek o' the rotten fens, whose loves I prize
As the dead carcasses of un-buried men
That do corrupt my air.

His superlative pride finds expression in his haughty pronouncement :

I banish you

As an example of his uncontrollable choler, the following lines can be quoted :

The fires i' the lowest hell fold-in the people !
Call me their traitor ! Thou injurious tribune !
Within thine eyes sat twenty thousand deaths,
In thy hands clutch'd as many millions, in

Thy lying tongue both numbers, I would say
"Thou liest" unto thee with a voice as free
As I do pray the gods.

The two Tribunes are revealed as very clever and tactful demagogues. They prepare the people before-hand to confirm any sentence that they might pronounce upon Coriolanus. They anticipate correctly how Coriolanus would easily fall into their trap, once his anger is roused. Says Brutus :

Put him to choler straight : he hath been used
Ever to conquer, and to have his worth
Of contradiction : being once chafed, he cannot
Be rein'd again to temperance ; then he speaks
What's in his heart ; and that is there which looks
With us to break his neck.

Shakespeare refuses to take sides in this scene. The Tribunes, in spite of all the wiles and tricks they employ, do not forfeit their claim to our sympathy. Rather, their main charge that Coriolanus is a potential tyrant, seems to have a sound basis.

Commenting on this scene John Palmer remarks, "The tribunes taking charge of the proceedings, lose no time in putting their agreed plan of action into effect. A single speech from Sicinius is enough. Coriolanus flies instantly into a passion. Sicinius in a speech which is not without dignity and in which every charge is well-founded, pronounces upon Coriolanus sentence of banishment. Nothing now remains for Coriolanus but to accept his doom."

IV. Shakespeare's debt to North's Plutarch :—

This scene is mainly modelled on North's Plutarch. Shakespeare has taken the following details from Plutarch :

(*a*) the hope entertained by Brutus and Sicinius that Coriolanus would invite disaster on himself through his haughty behaviour.

(*b*) the charge of the tribunes against Coriolanus that he aspires to be a tyrant.

(*c*) their desire that people should be assembled by tribes.

( ) the banishment of Coriolanus by the popular gathering.

(*e*) the sense of joy felt by the people at the banishment of Coriolanus.

We quote below two extracts from North's Plutarch to show how skilfully Shakespeare has "transformed history into drama and prose into poetry, without changing the story in any important degree."

(*i*) Marcius asked aloud of the Tribunes, what matter they should burden him with ? The Tribunes answered him that they would show how he did aspire to be king, and would prove that all his actions tended to usurp tyrannical power over Rome.

(*ii*) After declaration of the sentence, the people made such joy as they never rejoiced more for any battle they had won upon their enemies, they were so brave and lively and went home so jocularly from the assembly, for triumph of this sentence.

Line 1. *Charge him home*—press your accusation to the uttermost ; press the charge home to him.

Affects—aims at.

Line 2. *Tyrannical*—despotic. *If he evade us*—if he tries to escape, by offering a good defence.

Line 3. *Enforce*—press hard ; lay stress on.

Envy—malice ; ill-will.

Enforce him with his envy to the people—lay stress on the ill-will that he bears to the plebeians.

Line 4. *Spoil*—*i. e*, spoils of war ; plunder.

Got on—taken from ; won from.

The Antiates—men of Antium (situated to the south of Corioli).

Line 5. *What*—(here, it is used to express surprise.)

Line 9. *We have procured*—we have gained.

Line 10. *By the poll*—*i. e.* individually ; name by name.

Line 11. *Tribes*—('Roman plebs were divided into thirty tribes, four for the city and twenty-six for the country around Rome').

Line 12. *Presently*—at once.

Line 14. *I' the right and strength o' the commons*—as the privileges and power of the common people decree.

Be it either—i.e. whether my decision should be.

Line 17. *Prerogatives*—privileges ; rights.

Line 18. *And power i' the truth o' the cause*—and the authority which comes from the justice of the cause.

Line 19. *When such time*—at the time when ; at such time as.

Line 20. *Cease*—stop. *Din*—noise.

Line 21. *Enforce*—insist on. *Present*—immediate.

Line 22. *Of what we chance to sentence*—whatever sentence we happen to pronounce.

Line 23. *Make them be strong and ready for this hint*—prepare the people to be powerful and alert on this occasion.

(*Hint*=occasion).

Line 24. *Hap*—happen.

Line 25. *Put him to choler straight*—at once arouse his anger.

Lines 26—27. *To have his worth of contradiction*—to be allowed to contradict as he pleases *i. e.* he is accustomed to hold his own in controversy.

Chafed—irritated.

Line 28. *Rein'd again to temperance*—brought back to moderation.

(*Temperance*=self-control).

Lines 29—30. *And that is there which looks with us to break his neck*—and in his heart is a temper, which is likely, with our help, to bring him to his death.

Line 32. *Ostler*—the person who looks after the guests' horses at an inn.

The poorest piece—the smallest coin.

Line 33. *Will bear the knave by the volume*—will put up with being called a rogue several times.

Lines 32—33. *As an ostler that for the poorest piece*

......*by the volume*—Coriolanus means that he will be as calm as a man who holds guests' horses at an inn and who even for the smallest tip, endures abuse to any extent.

Line 34. *Chairs*—seats.

Line 36. *Throng our large temples with the shows of peace*—fill our big temples with crowds, that should come there to celebrate some glorious event connected with peace.

Note. According to Wright, "Shakespeare may have had in mind some occasion like that of November 24, 1588, when Queen Elizabeth went to St. Paul's to return thanks for the victory over the Spanish Armada".

Line 40: *Audience*—listen; give a hearing; give audience.

Line 42. *Than this present*—than with this present charge.

(*Present*=present charge).

Line 43. *Determine*—end; come to an end).

Must all determine here—i. e. will the business end here.

Demand—ask.

Line 44. *Submit you—i.e.* submit yourself.

Line 45. *Allow*—acknowledge.

Line 46. *Lawful censure*—sentence according to law.

(*Censure*=sentence; condemnation).

Line 47. *Upon you*—against you.

Lines 50—51. *Which show like graves i' the holy churchyard*—which bear testimony to his great qualities just as tombstones praise those who lie buried beneath them.

(*Show*=look; appear).

Lines 51—52. *Scratches with briers......laughter only*—(Coriolanus does not like to be flattered. He, therefore, deliberately under-rates his wounds. He suggests that his wounds are only scratches caused by some thorny bush.)

(*Brier*=a thorny shrub).

Line 54. *You find him like a soldier*—You discover him in the character of a soldier.

Line 55. *Accents*—words. *Malicious sounds*—sounds that show ill-will.

Line 56. *As become a soldier*—as are worthy of a soldier.

Line 57. *Rather than envy you*—rather than as expressing malice towards you.

Line 58. *The matter*—the cause.

Line 59. *With full voice*—unanimously ; with general agreement.

Line 60. *The very hour*—the very same hour.

Line 61: *You take it off*—*i. e.* you remove it. (The metaphor is from a garment which is put on and taken off).

Line 62. *I ought so*—I ought to do so *i.e.* I ought to answer.

Line 63. *Contrived*—plotted.

Line 64, *Season'd office* — office established by time.

To wind — to insinuate ; to wriggle yourself in cunningly.

Line 65. *Tyrannical*—despotic.

Line 67. *Temperately*—moderately.

Your promise—remember the promise (of remaining calm) that you made to us.

Line 68. *Fold in*—wrap round ; enclose ; cover as with a garment.

Line 69. *Their traitor*—traitor to them *i. e.* the people.

Injurious—insulting.

Line 70. *Within thine eyes sat*—if there sat within your eyes.

Line 71. *In thy hands clutch'd*—if in thy hands were grasped.

(*Clutch*=seize hastily).

As many millions—*i.e.* twenty million deaths.

Lines 71—72. *In thy lying tongue both numbers*—

If there were twenty thousand and twenty million deaths in your lying tongue.

(*Both numbers*=twenty thousand and twenty million).

Line 73. *Unto thee*—to you. *As free*—in an un-reserved manner.

Lines. 68—74. *The fires i' the lowest hell fold-in the people.........as I do pray the gods*—Coriolanus suddenly flies into a rage, when he is called a traitor to the people. He curses the people and addressing the insulting tribune says, "If I saw in your furious eyes twenty thousand deaths and if there were twenty million deaths in your hands, and if your lying tongue could sentence me to all these deaths taken to-gether, I will retort that you are lying. I will say it in as an un-reserved manner as I pray to the gods".

Line 74. *Mark you this* ?—do you notice this ?

Line 75. *To the rock—i. e.* let us take him to the Tarpeian rock and throw him from there.

Line 76. *New matter—i.e.* fresh charges that we had prepared.

Line 78. *Beating your officers*—namely, striking your officers like the Tribunes and the Aediles.

Line 79. *Strokes*—physical force.

Line 80. *Even this*—this alone without any further act.

Line 81. *Criminal*—offensive.

In such capital kind—'being of such a kind as must be punished by death.'

Line 83. *What do you prate of service—i.e.* you have no right to speak of my services to Rome.

Line 84. *I talk of that, that know it*—I talk of that because I am competent to do so.

Line 85. *You* ?—how dare you talk of my services ?

Line 87. *I'll know no further*—I will heed protests no more.

Line 88. *The steep Tarpeian death*—death by being thrown down the steep Tarpeian rock.

Line 89. *Vagabond exile*—exile that involves wandering in foreign countries.

Flaying—taking the skin off.

Pent—being pent; being confined; being imprisoned.

Line 90. *But with*—with only.

Line 91. *Fair word*—flattering word.

Lines 92—93. *Nor check my courage for what......*

......*Good morrow*—nor will I hesitate to speak my mind for anything they can give, even if it might be had, for only saying 'good morning.'

For that—because.

Line 95. *Envied against the people*—shown his malice towards the people.

Line 96. *As now at last*—as ultimately he has just now.

Line 97. *That not*—that not merely.

Line 98. *Ministers*—high state officials.

Line 99. *Distribute it*—apportion justice.

Line 100. *And in the power of us the tribunes*—and by the power which we as tribunes exercise.

Lines 101. *Banish him our city*—banish him from Rome.

Lines 102—104. *In peril of precipitation......*

......*Rome gates*—at the risk of being thrown down the Tarpeian rock, if he should dare to enter the gates of Rome again.

(*Rome gates*=gates of Rome).

Line 108. *My masters*—(this is addressed to the Tribunes).

And my common friends—(*i*) my friends, the commons or (*ii*) common people or plebeians.

Line 109. *No more hearing*—we will hear no longer.

Line 111. *Marks*—*i.e.* wounds.

Line 114. *My wife's estimate*—the estimation in which I hold my wife; "the rate at which I value my dear wife."

Lines 114—115. *Her womb's increase and treasure of*

my loins—*i. e.* our children.

If I would—if I desired.

Line 116. *We know your drift*—we know at what you are driving.

Line 117. *But he*—except that he.

Line 121. *Cry of curs*—pack of hounds.

Line 122. *Reek*—vapour *Rotten fens*—putrid swamps. *Prize*—value.

Line 123. *As*—as much as I prize (*i.e.* not at all).

Dead carcasses—dead bodies.

Line 124. *My air*—the air that I breathe.

I banish you—'it is not you who banish me, but I who, by quitting (leaving) Rome, banish you'.

Line 125. *And here remain with your uncertainty*—and may you remain here in your fickle-ness.

(*Uncertainty*=fickle ness)

Line 126. *Let every feeble rumour shake your hearts*—may you start trembling at the faintest rumour of war.

Lines 127—128. *Your enemies, with nodding of...... into despair*—may your enemies by means of the mere movements of the feathers in their helmets cause you to tremble with despair.

Still—always.

Lines 128—129. *Have the power still to banish your defenders*—may you retain the power to banish those who defend you against your enemies.

Line 130. *Which finds not till it feels*—which does not discover the consequences till it feels them.

Line 131. *Making not reservation of yourselves*—not even excepting yourselves.

Line 132. *Still*—always. *Foes*—enemies.

Line 133. *Abated*—crushed ; humbled ; weakened. *Captives*—prisoners.

Lines 133—134. *To some nation that won you without blows*—to some foreigner that had not to strike any blow even to over-power you.

Despising—hating ; holding in contempt.

Line 135. *For you*—on your account.

Line 136. *There is a world elsewhere*—*i. e.* the walls of your city do not enclose the world.

Line 139. *At gates*—*i. e.* at the gates.

Line 140. *Despite*—contempt ; hatred.

Line 141—*Give him deserved vexation*—taunt and annoy him as he deserves.

(*Vexation*=annoyance).

Lines—141—142. *Let a guard attend us*—let a guard accompany to protect us.

Note. Being a coward, Sicinius fears lest the supporters of Coriolanus should attack him.

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Act IV, Scene I

I. Summary of the Scene :—

This scene takes place at a gate of the city (of Rome). Coriolanus, while bidding farewell to his relatives and friends, asks his mother not to take his banishment to heart. He reminds her that she used to say that misfortune was a touch-stone of courage and that men of extra-ordinary heroism always rose above their distress.

Coriolanus asks his wife not to shed tears. Volumnia curses the people of Rome. Her son tells her that she should revive her old spirit and act like a brave woman. Coriolanus consoles also Cominius and Menenius. He assurses Volumnia that though he is going all alone, he will either perform some exceptional feats or will fall a prey to crafty plots.

Volumnia advises Coriolanus to take good Cominius with him. Cominius offers to accompany Coriolanus. The latter, however, declines the offer, saying that Cominius is too old to take to a life of wandering along with him (Coriolanus). He tells his friends and relatives that while he is alive, they will hear from him. Menenius wishes that he were younger and could accompany Coriolanus. The latter then bids them good-bye and departs from Rome.

II. Main events in the Scene

1. Coriolanus bids good-bye to his mother, his wife, Cominius, Menenius and the young nobility of Rome.
2. He asks Volumnia and Virgilia to cheer up.
3. He reminds his mother that according to her previous utterances, misfortune was a touch-stone of courage.
4. He assures her that though he is going alone, he will either perform some extra-ordinary feats or fall a victim to crafty conspiracies.
5. Volumnia asks him to take Cominius with him.
6. Cominius offers to accompany him, but Coriolanus declines the offer.

7. Coriolanus bids farewell to his relatives and friends and departs from the city.

III. Dramatic Significance of the Scene.

In this scene, which is mainly Shakespeare's invention, Coriolanus' character is idealised. He is shown to be a man of extra-ordinary patience and fortitude. He refuses to be dismayed by his great misfortune and puts a bold face on it. He asks his mother not to feel dis-heartened but to bear with her sorrows, like a brave woman. He politely declines the offer of Cominius to accompany him, in his exile. He retains his essential pride when he compares himself "to a lonely dragon." His attitude to adversity enlists our sympathy in his behalf. "Here, we see the human and the best side of his character." He appears to be more lovable in adversity than in triumph.

Some of his utterances provide us with examples of dramatic irony, for instance :

Though I go alone
Like to a lonely dragon, that his fen
Makes fear'd and talk'd of more than seen-your son
Will or exceed the common or be caught
With cautelous baits and practice.

Or

While I remain above the ground you shall
Hear from me still, and never of me ought
But what is like me formerly.

The full implications of these utterances dawn upon us in the later scenes, when he threatens to destroy Rome, in the capacity of the general of Volscian forces, and when he falls a victim to Aufidius's intrigues.

Commenting on this scene, John Palmer observes, "Shakespeare makes Coriolanus show to us the most amiable (lovable) side of his disposition (nature) at the very moment, when he is about to league himself with the enemies of Rome to lay her in ashes."

Stopford Brooke offers the following comment while referring to this scene :—

"In his farewell to his own people, he is as gentle, courteous, brave and steady as he is the opposite to the citizens.

To his own caste he is the perfect gentleman, to his mother the respectful and loving son. That he should be so fine a character among his own class makes his conduct to those not of his class all the worse."

On the whole, it is a sweet and tender scene, that reveals a new facet of Coriolanus' character, and which gives rise to considerable suspense.

IV. Shakespeare's debt to North's Plutarch :

This scene is, in the main, Shakespeare's invention. Shakespeare departs from North's Plutarch in making Coriolanus depart alone, and not accompanied by "three or four of his friends." Shakepeare has made use of two details mentioned by Plutarch—first, the fact of his bidding good-bye to his mother and his wife and secondly, the fact of his friends, accompanying him to the gate of the city.

Lines 1—2. *The beast with many heads*—i.e. the people (who are like the many-headed Hydra).

Note. On two previous occasions the people are referred to as "the many-headed multitude" (Act II, Scene III) and as "Hydra" (Act III, Scene I, Line 93).

Butts me away—pushes me out.

(*Butt*=strike with the head).

Note. The metaphor is from a goat that strikes its enemies with its head.

Line 3. *Ancient*—former. *You were used*—you were accustomed.

Line 4. *Extremity*—extreme misfortune. *Was the trier of spirits*—i.e. was a touchstone of one's courage.

Line 5. *Common chances*—ordinary misfortunes of life.

Lines 6—7. *All boats alike show'd mastership in floating*—all boats proved themselves capable of keeping afloat.

Lines 7—9. *Fortune's blows when most struck home...... a noble cunning*—(According to Dr. Johnson these lines mean, "When Fortune strikes her hardest blows, to be wounded, and yet continue calm, requires a noble philosophy.")

(*Cunning*=knowledge ; wisdom).

Note. There is a confusion of construction in these lines. Shakespeare begins with "Fortune's blows" as the subject, and

changes it to 'being gentle wounded', in the middle of the sentence. Thus the verb 'craves' has two subjects in these lines. The two constructions that are confused are :

(*i*) Fortune's blows crave a noble cunning if one would be gentle when wounded by them.

(*ii*) Being gentle, when wounded by fortunes blows, craves a noble cunning.

You were used to—you were accustomed to.

Line 10. *Precepts*—maxims ; rules for moral conduct.

Invincible—unconquerable.

Line 11. *Conn'd them*—learned them ; studied them.

Line 13. *The red pestilence*—the red plague.

Note. Elizabethan physicians recognised red, yellow and black varieties of plague. The red plague was the severest and the most malignant of the three.

Line 14. *Occupations*—trades or professions.

What, what, what—(exclamation of impatience).

Line 15. *I am lack'd*—I am missed.

Line 16. *Resume that spirit when you were wont to say*—take up that spirit which possessed you when you used to say.

Line 17. *Hercules*—the legendary Greek hero who was son of Zeus, and who lived in Thebes. He killed his son in a fit of madness and was required to atone for this sin by serving Eurystheus. The latter asked him to perform twelve difficult tasks, which iucluded the killing of the Erymanthian boar, the fight with the Amazons, and the taming of the Cretan bull etc.

Line 18. *Six of his labours*—i.e. six out of the twelve difficult tasks that Hercules was asked to accomplish.

Line 19. *Sweat*—i.e. labour.

Line 20. *Droop not*—i.e. do not feel dejected.

Adieu—good-bye.

Line 22. *Thy tears are salter than a young man's*—it is more irksome for you to shed tears than for a young man (or, your tears are a sign of a deeper feeling than those of a young man).

Line 23. *Venomous*—poisonous ; injurious.

Sometime—former.

My sometime general—(here, Coriolanus addresses Cominius, under whom he served in the Volscian War).

Line 25. *Heart—hardening spectacles*—sights which render the heart callous or feelingless.

Line 26. *Fond*—foolish. *Wail*—be-wail ; mourn.

In-evitable strokes—blows of fate which cannot be avoided.

Line 27. *Wot*—know.

Line 28. *Hazards*—risks run by me. *Still—always. Your solace*—a source of comfort to you.

Line 29. *Believe't not lightly*—be firmly assured.

Line 30. *Like to*—like. *Fen*—low, marshy ground.

Line 31. *Makes fear'd*—makes men afraid of.

And talk'd of—and is talked of by men.

Lines 29—31. *Though I go alone.........more than seen*—Coriolanus means that just as a dragon who lives in a low, marshy ground is feared and discussed by the people, because it is rarely seen, similarly he will be feared and discussed because he is going into banishment.

Lines 31—33. *Your son will or exceed the common...... practice*—your son either will do something extra-ordinary or will fall a prey to cunning snares and conspiracies.

(*Cautelous*=deceitful. *Practice*=plot.)

My first son—my noble son.

Line 34. *Whither*—where.

Line 36. *More than*—more definite than. *Exposture*—exposure.

Lines 35—37. *Determine on some course......before thee*—decide on a definite course of action rather than expose yourself in a wild spirit to anything that comes up your way.

Line 38. *Devise*—plan.

Line 39. *Rest*—settle.

Lines 40—41. *If the time thrust forth a cause for thy repeal*—if circumstances should give us a chance to recall you.

(*Repeal*=recall).

We shall not send—we will not have to send.

Line 43. *Lose advantage*—lose the favourable opportunity.

Line 44. *The needer*—the man who needs the favourable opportunity.

Line 45. *Thou hast years upon thee*—you are old.

Lines 45—46. *Thou art too full of the wars' surfeits*—you have had too much of the extreme toils of war.

Rove—wander.

Line 47. *That's yet unbruised*—i.e. I who am still strong and none the worse for my toils of war.

Bring me but—bring me only.

Line 49. *Friends of noble touch*—friends whose nobility has been tested and proved.

When I am forth—when I have left the city.

Line 51. *I remain above the ground*—i.e. I remain unburied ; I remain alive.

Line 52. *Still*—constantly.

Aught—anything.

Line 53. *But what is like me formerly*—but what is in accord with my previous character.

That's worthily—it may mean either "that is worthily spoken" or "that manner of your life will be worthy."

Line 55. *If I could shake off but one seven years*—if I could shake off so short a period as seven years (if I could be seven years younger).

Line 56. *By the good gods*—in the name of the gods ; I swear by gods.

Line 57. *I'ld with thee every foot*—I would go with you wherever you might go.

Act IV, Scene II

I. Summary of the Scene :

The scene takes place in a street near the gate of the city (Rome). Volumnia, Virgilia and Menenius come across Brutus and Sicinius. Volumnia curses the two tribunes. She calls them

cunning and holds them responsible for banishing her valiant son. Even the gentle Virgilia snubs one of the tribunes—Sicinius. Volumnia, in words charged with bitterness, accuses the tribunes of their inability to judge the true worth of her son and remarks that Coriolanus is as superior to all the Romans, as the Capitol is to the meanest house in Rome. Brutus and Sicinius decide to slink. As they steal away, Volumnia wishes that the gods had nothing to do, but to confirm her curses. Menenius tells Volumnia that she has spoken to good effect. He invites her to supper. She tells him that anger is her meat (food) and that she sups upon herself. She advises Virgilia to give up crying and to be as angry as Juno, the queen of heaven. Menenius rebukes Volumnia mildly for being so violent.

II. Main events in the Scene :

1. Volumnia, Virgilia and Menenius meet Brutus and Sicinius in a street near the gate of the city.
2. Volumnia curses the two tribunes, holding them responsible for her son's banishment.
3. The tribunes steal away.
4. Volumnia wishes that gods could confirm her curses.
5. Menenius invites her to supper. She declines the invitation by saying that she feeds on anger.
6. She advises Virgilia to give up crying and to be angry and dignified like Juno.

III. Dramatic significance of the Scene :

This is a short scene, which relieves the tension of the last two acts. Volumnia, by giving the tribunes a bit of her mind, provides us the much-needed relief. The crafty tribunes are absolutely floored by her, and steal away like frightened children.

This scene "helps to bridge over the interval during which we may suppose Coriolanus" to formulate his plans. The suspense created by the previous scene is sustained throughout this and the next scene. Coriolanus, though absent, is not allowed to be forgotten. In order to maintain balance, our attention is drawn to his great services to Rome and his infinite superiority to the tribunes and the common people.

This scene sheds some light on the character of Volumnia,

who when roused, can be as choleric and violent as Coriolanus. The biting manner in which she curses the tribunes, puts us immediately in mind of her son. She greets the tribunes with the words :

The hoarded plague o' the gods requite your love. She calls Sicinius foxship and wishes that "her son were in Arabia, and thy tribe before him and his good sword in his hand." She exhibits the same contempt for the common people that Coriolanus does in the first three acts.

She offers a revealing comment on her own character, when she tells Menenius :

Anger's my meat ; I sup with me
And so shall starve with feeding.

Brave Roman matron as she is, she asks Virgilia to give up whining (crying) and lament as she (Volumnia) does, in anger Juno-like.

IV. Shakespeare's debt to North's Plutarch.

Shakespeare does not owe anything, for this scene, to North's Plutarch. It is entirely his invention. However, it is possible that Shakespeare has utilised Plutarch's hint, concerning the widening of the gulf between the nobility and the plebeians, after the banishment of Coriolanus.

Line 1. *Bid them all home*—ask all the citizens to go home (This is addressed to the Aedile).

He's gone—Coriolanus has gone. *And we'll no further*—(*i*) we will go no further, or (*ii*) we will proceed no further in our revenge.

Line 2. *The nobility*—*i.e.* the Patricians. *Vex'd*—annoyed. *Whom*—who.

Lines 2—3. *Have sided in his behalf*—have taken his part.

Line 3. *Now we have shown*—now that we have given a proof of our power.

Line 4. *Let us seem humbler*—let us appear more moderate.

Line 5. *A-doing*—in doing.

Line 7. *Ancient*—former.

Line 10. *Have ta'en note of us*—have noticed us.

Line 11. *Hoarded plague*—stored-up plague (such plagues as are reserved by the gods for the persons who deserve their special vengeance).

Line 12. *Requite*—(here, punish).

Line 13. *If that*—if. (*that*—is unnecessary).

I could—I could speak.

If that I could for weeping—if my tears did not prevent me from speaking.

Line 14. *Will you be gone ?*—do you wish to escape ?

Line 15. *You shall stay too*—you too will not try to escape.

Line 16. *Are you mankind*—are you a man-like woman.

Note. "*A mankind* woman is a woman with the roughness of a man ; and, in an aggravated sense, a woman ferocious, violent, and eager to shed blood" (Johnson).

Line 17. *Ay, fool*—Volumnia understands 'mankind' to mean "human". She thus makes Sicinius' taunt look ridiculous, because it comes to mean : are you human ?

Note but this fool—just look at this fool !

Line 18. *Foxship*—cunning.

Hadst thou foxship—"hadst thou, fool as thou art, mean cunning enough to banish Coriolanus" (Johnson).

Line 19. *To banish him*—to banish Coriolanus.

Line 20. *O blessed heavens*—(Sicinius suggests by uttering this remark that it is a pity that Volumnia has lost her senses).

Line 21. *Moe*—more. *Than ever thou wise words*—than ever you speak wise words.

Line 23. *Nay, but thou shalt stay too*—*i. e.* but no, you shall stay to hear what I have to say (Volumnia first asks Sicinius to go, then changes her mind, and wants him to stay).

I would—I wish.

Line 24. *Were in Arabia*—were in a desert where no one could interfere.

Thy tribe—your race (or the plebeians who support Sicinius).

Line 27. *Thy posterity—i. e.* your children.

Line 28. *Good man—i. e.* Coriolanus.

The wounds that he does bear—to think of the wounds that he bears.

Line 30. *I would*—I wish.

Lines 31—32. *And not unknit himself the noble knot he made*—and had not himself un-bound the noble bond of brave deeds by which he had bound his country to him.

The noble knot—(the noble deeds done by Coriolanus).

Line 33. *I would he had—i. e.* how dare do you use these words. *'T was you incensed the rabble*—it was you who stirred up this mutiny.

Line 34. *Cats*—(the rabble is referred to as cats—a term of contempt).

As fitly judge—no better judge.

His worth—i. e. Coriolanus' worth.

Line 37. *Get you gone*—go away as quickly as you can.

Lines 39—42. *As far as doth the Capitol exceed......... does exceed you all*—my son and Virgilia's husband, whom you have banished, is as superior to you all, as the Capitol is to the meanest house in Rome.

Line 43. *To be baited*—to be teased ; to be tortured.

Note. The metaphor is from the Elizabethan pastime of bear-baiting. A bear was tied to a stake and teased by furious dogs.

Line 44. *With one*—by one. *That wants her wits*—who is without her senses ; who is mad.

(*Wants*=lacks).

My prayers—i. e. my curses ; my prayers for your ruin.

Line 46. *Meet 'em*—meet the tribunes.

Line 47. *Unclog*—un-burden.

Line 48. *To't*—near it.

You have told them home—this may mean either (*i*) you have spoken to good effect, or (*ii*) you have given an exact description of them.

Line 50. *Anger's my meat*—I feed on anger ; anger is my food.

Lines 50—51. *I sup upon myself, and so shall starve with feeding*—I feed upon my bitter thoughts, and thus I shall perish with hunger.

Line 52. *Puling*—whining.

Leave this faint puling—(this is addressed to Virgilia. Volumnia asks Virgilia to give up feeble whining).

Lines 52—53. *Lament as I do in anger*—let your sorrow take the form of anger, as mine has.

Line 53. *Juno*—the wife of Jupiter and the queen of heaven.

Line 54. *Fie*—shame (Menenius mildly rebukes Volumnia for her being angry like Juno).

Act IV, Scene III

1. Summary of the Scene : The scene is a high-way between Rome and Antium. Adrian, a Volsce and Nicanor, a Roman, who is a spy in the Volscian service, meet each other. Adrian asks Nicanor to acquaint the former with the latest news in Rome. The latter tells Adrian that Rome has been confronted with a kind of a civil war, because the people have turned against the patricians and the nobles. The senators have taken the banishment of Coriolanus to heart and are thinking of depriving people of all power and abolishing the office of the tribunes. Adrian is pleased to know about the banishment of Coriolanus and informs Nicanor, that the Volscians have raised on army to attack Rome. Nicanor expresses his satisfaction at this and remarks that the latest information that he has conveyed to Adrian, will give a signal to the Volscians for taking the field. Adrian and Nicanor then go their way together, arm in arm.

II. Main events in the Scene :

1. Adrian, a Volsce and Nicanor, a Roman, meet each other on a highway between Rome and Antium.
2. Nicanor, who is a spy in the Volscian service, informs Adrian of the banishment of Coriolanus and of the state of conflict existing between the common people and the senators in Rome.
3. Adrian tells Nicanor that the Volscian army is ready to attack Rome.

III. Dramatic Significance of the Scene :

This scene gives us a gist of events that have taken place after Coriolanus' departure from Rome. It suggests that consequent on the banishment of Coriolanus, Rome has become a divided country. There is a serious conflict between the nobility and the common people, so much so that the senators are thinking of taking away all power from the people and abolishing the office of the tribunes. Further, that the banishment of Coriolanus has greatly weakened the defence potential of Rome.

This scene carries the plot farther by stating that the Volscian army has made full preparations to attack Rome. This piece of information gives rise to suspense.

The dramatist does not allow us to forget Coriolanus even in this short scene, in which two men apparently un-connected with the main events of the play discuss in an informal manner, the circumstances of his banishment.

"The scene forms a bridge between Coriolanus' departure from Rome and his appearance in Antium."

It is to be noted that this scene takes place half-way between Rome and Antium, where the "next important phase of the dramatic action will take place."

IV. Shakespeare's debt to North's Plutarch :

This scene is Shakespeare's own invention. He does not owe anything to North's Plutarch.

Stage Direction : *A highway*—a public route.

Line 3. *I have forgot*—I have forgotten.

Lines 4—5. *My services are. as you are, against 'em*—My services like yours are directed against the Romans.

Note : He is a Volscian spy who conveys news from Rome to the Volscian government.

Know you me yet ?—do you not yet recognise me ?

Line 6. *No*—Certainly it cannot be so.

Line 9. *But your favour is well approved by your tongue*—your face is proved by your voice ; I can recognise you by your voice.

(*Favour*=face ; countenance. *Approved*=proved. *Tongue* =accent ; voice).

Heart-hardening spectacles ; tell these sad women
'Tis *fond*[1] to *wail*[2] inevitable *strokes*[3],
As 'tis to laugh at 'em. My mother, you wot well
My *hazards*[4] *still*[5] have been your *solace*[6] : and
Believe't not lightly—though I go alone,
Like to a lonely dragon, that his fen
Makes fear'd and talk'd of more than seen—your son
Will or exceed the common or be caught
With *cautelous*[7] baits and *practice*[8].

Vol. My first son,
Whither wilt thou go ? Take good Cominius
With thee awhile : determine on some course,
More than a wild *exposture*[9] to each chance
That starts i' the way before thee.

Cor. O the gods !

Com. I'll follow thee a month, devise with thee
Where thou shalt rest, that thou mayst hear of us
And we of thee : so if the time thrust forth
A cause for thy *repeal*[10], we shall not send
O'er the vast world to seek a single man,
And lose *advantage*[11], which doth ever cool
I' the absence of the needer.

Cor. Fare ye well :
Thou hast years upon thee ; and thou art too full
Of the wars' *surfeits*,[12] to go *rove*[13] with one
That's yet unbruised : bring me but out at gate.

1. foolish.
2. lament.
3. blows (of destiny)
4. risks.
5. always.
6. comfort.
7. cunning.
8. plot.
9. exposure
10. re-call.
11. favourable opportunity.
12. unlimited experiences.
13. wander.

faced have always been a source of comfort and pride for you; and though I go alone like a lonely dragon who, because of his hiding himself in his marshy retreat, is more feared and talked of than if he showed himself more frequently, yet I want you to believe firmly that your son will show himself something more than an ordinary man, unless he falls a victim to cunning schemes and plots. (Although I am going alone into banishment, I will not be forgotten and despised but will be more talked of and more feared than if I were to be seen in the city, even as a lonely dragon, who lives alone in his marshy abode, is more feared and talked of than if he were to be seen frequently; and I assure you that your son will yet prove his exceptional merits unless he is trapped by cunning people who may use their schemes and plots against him.)

Volumnia. Noblest and most eminent of men, where will you go? Take good Cominius with you for some time. Decide on some course of action more definite than that of recklessly exposing yourself to every mischance that may suddenly show itself in your path.

Coriolanus. O, the gods!

Cominius. I will accompany you for a month, and discuss with you where you ought to live, so that you may receive news from us and we may get news from you, and so that, if circumstances should suddenly give us an opportunity of recalling you, we should not have to send messengers all over the world in search of a single individual and thus lose the favourable opportunity which always quickly vanishes when he, who should make use of it, is absent from the scene.

Coriolanus. Farewell; you are advanced in age: and you have endured the ordeal of wars to such an extent that it is not possible for you to go wandering in the company of one who is comparatively still vigorous and unhurt. Just come with me to

2. He learns from a citizen that Aufidius is entertaining the lords of the city at a feast, held at his house.
3. Coriolanus, when left alone, wonders at the vicissitudes of life.
4. He marvels at the change which has come over himself, namely, how he hates Rome and loves Antium now.
5. He feels that if he is welcomed by Aufidius, he (Coriolanus) will serve the Volscian state.

III. Dramatic significance of the scene :

This is another short scene. It carries the plot further, because it suggests that Coriolanus has positively decided to throw in his lot with the Volscians, in order to avenge himself on Rome. He emerges out as a traitor, here as he places himself above his country. The dramatist, in order to enlist our sympathy for Coriolanus, puts a speech into the latter's mouth, justifying his treachery. Coriolanus suggests in this speech that circumstances, rather than his own selfishness, are responsible for his turning against Rome.

This scene contains one of the most famous purple passages in the play, namely, Coriolanus' soliloquy (speech addressed to himself), beginning with the line :

O world, thy slippery turns ! Friends now fast sworn.

The last few lines of this speech, in which Coriolanus speculates whether he will be welcomed by Aufidius, give rise to suspense, and prepare us for the next scene.

IV. Shakespeare's debt to North's Plutarch :

Shakespeare has made use of two hints mentioned by Plutarch : First, the resolution of Coriolanus to avenge himself on Rome ; secondly, his entering the city of Antium disguised.

The following passage from North's Plutarch refers to the second hint : "He (Coriolanus) dis-guised himself in such attire (dress), as he thought no man could ever have known him for the person he was It was twilight when he entered the city of Antium, and many people met him in the streets, but no man knew him".

Stage direction : *Apparel*—dress. *Muffled*—wrapped up, especially in a cloak or scarf.

Line 1. *Goodly*—imposing in appearaanc.

Line 2. *Thy widows*—*i. e.* many widows who are to be found in the city of Antium.

Line 3. *Fair edifices*—beautiful buildings. *'Fore my wars*—before my blows or attacks.

Line 4. *Groan and drop*—cry and fall.

(*Groan*=to utter a low, mournful sound in pain).

Lines 2–4. *Many an heir of these fair edifices......drop*—*i. e.* I have killed many would-be owners of these beautiful buildings in the wars I have made.

Line 5. *Spits*—sharp sticks or bars.

Line 6. *Puny*—petty ; small. *Slay*—kill.

Save you—God save you.

And you—and may God save you, too.

Line 7. *If it be your will*—if you will be so good.

Line 8. *Lies*—lodges : dwells ; lives.

Line 10. *Beseech you*—I beseech (request) you.

Line 12. *O world, thy slippery turns*—O world how sudden are your vicissitudes ; O world, you are full of strange ups and downs.

Now—*i. e.* at one moment.

Fast sworn—bound to each other by firm pledges.

Lines 13. *Whose double bosoms seem to wear one heart*—whose two bosoms appear to have one heart *i. e.* who are two but appear to share one heart between them.

Lines 14–15. *Whose hours, whose bed, whose meal and exercise, are still together*—who spend their time together, who sleep in one bed, who share their meals and recreations.

Lines 15—16. *Who twin, as 'twere, in love un-separable*—who are like two inseparable twins in their love for each other.

(*Twin*—two children brought forth at a birth. *Un-separable*—inseparable. *Within this hour*—within an hour ; in a short time.)

Line 17. *On the dissension of a doit*—because of some trifling dis-pute (quarrel).

(*Doit*=a Dutch coin worth half a farthing).

Lines 17—18—*Break out to a bitterest enmity*—break out into bitterest hostility towards each other.

Fellest foes—most fierce enemies.

Line 19. *Whose passions and whose plots have broke their sleep*—whose sleep has been dis-turbed by the fierce-ness of their anger and by their plots.

(*Have broke*=have broken).

Line 20. *To take the one the other*—to destroy each other.

Line 21. *Trick*—trifle.

Trick not worth an egg—*i. e.* some very trifling circumstance.

Line 22. *Inter-join their issues*—either, "let their children inter-marry", or "unite their designs or fortunes."

Lines 23—24. *My love's upon this enemy town*—I bestow my love upon this town, which should naturally be hostile to me.

If he slay me—if Aufidius should kill me.

Line 25. *If he give me way*—if he may give way to me *i. e.* accede to my wishes.

———

Act IV, Scene V.

I. Summary of the Scene :

Coriolanus arrives at the hall in which Aufidius is entertaining the lords of the city (*i. e.* Antium). He is asked by Aufidius's servants to get out. He refuses to obey them. One of the servants informs Aufidius, who presently appears on the scene. He fails to recognise Coriolanus. The latter then reveals his identity and acquaints him with the circumstances under which he was banished from Rome. He places two alternatives before Aufidius, either to kill him or to befriend him, so that he (Coriolanus) may serve the Volscians, as well as take his revenge against Rome.

Aufidius receives him with open arms. He assures Coriolanus that the former now loves him as much as he hated him (Coriolanus) in the past.

He invites Coriolanus to enter the hall and meet the Volscian senators. He promises to give him (Coriolanus) half

of his commission, and, a free hand in attacking Rome.

In the absence of Coriolanus and Aufidius, the two servants pretend that they had seen through Coriolanus' disguise. The third servant re-enters and informs them, how warmly Coriolanus was received by the Volscian lords, and how he will share the commission with Aufidius.

II. Main events in the Scene :

1. Coriolanus appears at the hall where Aufidius is entertaining the Volscian lords at a feast.
2. Aufidius's servants ask him to get out.
3. He refuses to obey them.
4. Aufidius appears on the scene.
5. Coriolanus reveals his identity to Aufidius, when the latter cannot recognise him.
6. Coriolanus wishes either to be killed by Aufidius or to be allowed to serve the Volscians, so that he may avenge himself on Rome.
7. Aufidius welcomes him warmly and promises to give him half of his commission.
8. Coriolanus is led into the hall and introduced to the Volscian lords.
9. The third servant informs his two fellow servants how the Volscian lords received Coriolanus with open arms, and agreed to his sharing the commission with Aufidius.

III. Dramatic importance of the Scene :

According to A.J.F. Collins, "This is the central scene of the Fourth Act and occupies the same position in the second part of the action as Act II, Scenc III does in the first part."

This scene reveals Coriolanus to be as proud in misfortune as in good fortune. He does not flatter Aufidius while asking the latter to do him a favour. He looks upon Aufidius as well as the Volscians as mere instruments of his revenge. He places proudly two alternatives before Aufidius, either to kill him or to allow him to serve the Volscians, so that he may be able to punish his thankless country. He concludes his long speech with the words :

Since I have ever followed thee with hate,
Drawn tuns of blood out of thy country's breast,
And cannot live but to thy shame, unless
It be to do thee service.

There is a moment of supreme suspense as he waits for Aufidius's answer.

Aufidius, who has been swept off his feet by Coriolanus' sudden and strange resolve to play the traitor to his native land, is so overcome by emotions that he bursts out, exclaiming :

O Marcius, Marcius !
Each word thou hast spoke hath weeded from my heart
A root of ancient envy.

His generous response, however, fails to move Coriolanus, till he (Aufidius) informs him that the Volscian army is already planning to attack Rome. Coriolanus feels that all his wishes have been granted immediately and exclaims :

You bless me, gods !

This scene shows both Coriolanus and Aufidius at disadvantage. The former compromises his patriotism for the sake of wreaking his revenge, whereas Aufidius by receiving his sworn enemy with open arms, falsifies his true nature. He is certainly psychologically inconsistent in embracing Coriolanus whom he (Aufidius) hates and envies, and whom he had sworn to kill by hook or crook.

So far as dramatic effect is concerned, this is one of the most spectacular scenes in the play. Herein two strong men and sworn enemies meet and much to the surprise of the spectators, undergo a change of heart, which borders almost on the miraculous.

This scene gives us also two passages of low life which serve as 'an ironic frame-work to Coriolanus' act of betrayal.' They also provide the element of humour, especially when the three servants compare and contrast Coriolanus and Aufidius as well as peace and war.

IV. Shakespeare's debt to North's Plutarch :

This scene is mainly modelled on North's Plutarch. Shakespeare has borrowed all the important details from Plutarch, for example, Coriolanus' visit to Aufidius's house, Coriolanus' speech addressed to Aufidius, and the acceptance of Coriolanus' offer by Aufidius.

It is to be noted that the speech of Coriolanus is one of the longest passages of verbal coincidence with North's Plutarch. Indeed, Shakespeare has merely versified Plutarch's version almost throughout this speech.

We give below Coriolanus' speech as it occurs in North's Plutarch :

"*If thou knowest me not yet, Tullus,* he (Coriolanus) said unto him (Aufidius) *and seeing me dost not* perhaps believe me to be the man, indeed ; I must of necessity *bewray myself* to be that I am Caius *Marcius, who hath done to thyself particularly, and to all the Volces generally great hurt and mischief,* which I cannot *deny for my sur-name of Coriolanus,* which I bear. For I never had other benefit of re-compense, of all the true and *painful service* I have done, and the *extreme dangers* I have been in, *but this only sur-name, a good memory and witness of the malice and dis-pleasure thou should'st bear me.*

Indeed the name only remaineth with me, for the rest, *the envy and cruelty of the people* of Rome have taken from me, by *the sufferance of the dastardly nobility* and magistrates, *who have forsaken me,* and let me be banished by the people. *The extremity* hath now driven me to come as a poor suitor, to *take thy chimney hearth, not of any hope to save my life* thereby. *For if I had feared death,* I would not have come hither to have put my life to hazard *But pricked forward with spite* and desire I have to be avenged of them that thus have banished me, whom now I begin to be avenged on, putting my person between thy enemies. Wherefore, *if thou hast any heart to be wrecked* of the injuries thy enemies have done thee, speed thee now, and *let my misery serve thy turn* and so use it as, my *service may be a benefit* to the Volsces, promising them that I will fight with better good-will for all of you, than I did when I was against you, knowing that they fight more valiantly, who know the force of the

enemy than such as have never proved it. *And if it be so that thou dare not, and that thou art weary to prove fortune any more, then am I also weary to live longer.* And it were no wisdom in thee to save the life of him who has been hitherto thy mortal enemy, and whose services now can nothing help nor pleasure thee."

Note. Shakespeare's main departures from Plutarch are :

(*a*) Shakespeare has introduced conversation between Coriolanus and Aufidius's servants.

(*b*) Shakespeare has made the offer of half the command belong to the very first meeting between Coriolanus and Aufidius. In Plutarch this offer belongs to a different occasion.

Line 1. *What service is here* !—what kind of serving do you call this ?

Note. He means that the servants are very lazy and are not performing their duties well.

Line 2. *Our fellows—i. e.* our fellow servants.

Line 5. *A goodly house*—a house, imposing in appearance. *The feast smells well*—the feast is very appetizing.

Line 7. *What would you have* ?—what is your business here ? *Whence*—from which place.

Line 8. *Go to the door—i. e.* get out.

Line 9. *Entertainment*—treatment.

Line 10. *In being Coriolanus*—"in having derived that name (*i e.* Coriolanus) from the sack of Corioli".

Note. Coriolanus means that though he is the conqueror of Corioli, he is not being treated well.

Line 12. *Companions*—low fellows.

Line 17. *I'll have you talked with anon*—I will ask some one to scold you, presently.

(*Anon*=presently).

Line 24. *Avoid the house*—get out of the house.

Line 25. *I will not hurt your hearth*—I will not harm your house.

Line 28. *A marvellous poor one—i e.* an extremely poor gentleman.

Line 30. *Poor gentleman*—(this is said in mockery).

Line 32. *Avoid*—go away.

Line 33. *Follow your function*—go and do your work.

Batten on cold bits—grow fat on fragments from your master'e table.

(*Batten*=grow fat. *Bits*=scraps of food).

Line 34. *You will not*—you will not go away.

Line 39. *Under the canopy*—under the sky.

Line 43. *I' the city of kites and crows*—*i. e.* in the open air.

Line 44. *Daws*—jackdaws (a jackdaw is regarded as a silly chatterer).

Note. Jack-daw is a noisy bird and a chattering person is often called by this name.

Then thou dwellest with daws too—*i. e.* then you are a foolish chatterer also.

Line 46. *I serve not thy master*—*i. e.* I am not a fellow like you.

Note. Coriolanus implies that he is not a foolish chatterer like Aufidius's servants.

Line 47. *Do you meddle with my master*—*i.e.* have you business with our master ?

Line 49. *Meddle with*—interfere with.

Line 51. *Pratest*—chatterest.

Trencher—a wooden plate for cutting things on.

Line 54. *But for disturbing the lords*—if I had not been afraid of disturbing the lords.

Line 55. *What wouldst thou ?*—what do you want

Line 59. *Think me for the man I am*—take me for what really I am.

Line 60. *Commands me*—bids me.

Name myself—*i.e.* to name myself.

Line 63. *Grim*—forbidding ; stern.

Lines 63—64. *Thy face bears a command in't*—your face is that of a man of authority.

Tackle—*i.e.* dress ; clothes.

Line 65. *Thou show'st a noble vessel*—your appearance is noble.

Line 66. *Prepare thy brow to frown*—get ready to knit thy brow.

Line 68. *Who hath done*—(Coriolanus speaks of himself in the third person).

Line 69. *Particularly*—individually.

Line 70. *Hurt*—harm.

Line 71. *Surname*—*i.e.* title.

Line 73. *Are requited*—are rewarded.

Line 74. *But*—only. *Memory*—memorial.

Lines 75—76. *And witness of the malice and dis-pleasure ....bear me*—and a reminder of the ill-will and hatred which you are sure to feel towards me.

Line 77. *Envy*—hatred.

Line 78. *Dastard*—cowardly.

Line 79. *Have all for-sook me*—have all for-saken (deserted) me.

Hath devour'd the rest—has put out of sight (has forgotten) my services to Rome.

Line 81. *Whoop'd*—hooted, driven out with cries and shouts.

This extremity—this misfortune.

Line 82. *Thy hearth*—your home.

Out of hope—owing to any hope.

Line 85. *'Voided*—avoided.

Line 86. *In mere spite*—in absolute hatred.

Line 87. *To be full quit of those*—to avenge myself fully on those.

My banishers—those who have banished me.

Line 88. *A heart of wreak*—a heart inspired by vengeance.

(*Wreak*=revenge).

That will revenge—so that you wish to revenge.

Line 89. *Particular*—personal ; individual.

Lines 89—90. *Maims of shame*—shameful injuries.

Seen through—seen throughout.

Line 91. *Make my misery serve thy turn*—take advantage of my miserable condition to effect your will.

Line 92. *My revengeful services*—the services that I render to you while I avenge myself on the Romans.

Line 94. *Canker'd*—spiteful ; corrupted ; dis-eased.

Spleen—spite ; rage ; anger ; fury.

Line 95. *All the under fiends*—all the devils of the lower world.

Line 96. *Thou darest not this*—you dare not do this.

To prove more fortune—to try again the fortune of war ; to risk further what the goddess of Fortune may have in store for you.

Line 99. *Ancient*—long-standing.

Line 100. *But a fool*—only a fool.

Line 101. *Hate*—hatred.

Line 102. *Tuns*—tun is a measure of capacity.

(*Tuns*=great casks).

Line 103. *But to thy shame*—without bringing shame to you.

Line 105. *Hast spoke*—has spoken.

Hath weeded—has taken out.

Line 106. *Ancient envy*—former or long-standing hatred.

Jupiter—the president of Roman gods.

Line 107. *Yond cloud*—the cloud which is distant but within view.

Divine—heavenly ; spiritual.

Lines 109—110. *Let me twine mine arms about thy body*—let me embrace you.

Where against—against which (*i.e.* your body).

Line 111. *My grained ash*—my lance made of ash.

(*Ash*=a hardwood tree).

Hath broke—has broken.

Line 112. *And scarr'd the moon with splinters*—the splinters of the broken lance flew high in the air.

(*Scarr'd*=marked with scars. *Splinters*=sharp-edged or thin pieces broken off from wood).

I clip—I embrace.

Line 113. *The anvil of my sword*—the body (*i. e.* the body of Coriolanus) on which my sword has struck. Aufidius means that Coriolanus' body has been to the former's sword what the anvil is to the iron which is hammered on it.

(*Anvil*=a heavy iron block on which metal work is laid for beating).

Contest—compete.

Line 114. *Hotly*—warmly.

Line 116. *Contend*—struggle in opposition.

Line 118. *Sigh'd truer breath*—breathed forth more sincere sighs.

That I see—*i. e.* seeing.

Line 119. *More dances my rapt heart*—causes my enraptured heart to dance.

(*Rapt heart*=heart carried away by love).

Line 120. *My wedded mistress*—my wife.

Line 121. *Bestride my threshold*—step over the threshold of my home.

Mars—the Roman god of war.

Line 122. *A power*—an army.

On foot—gathered ; assembled.

I had a purpose—I had decided.

Line 123. *To hew thy target from thy brawn*—to cut your hield from your muscular arm.

Line 124. *Or lose mine arm for't*—or lose my own arm in the attempt.

Beat me—beaten me.

Out—out and out ; thoroughly.

Line 125. *Several*—separate ; distinct ; different.

Nightly—every night.

Line 126. *Encounters*—meetings in conflict.

'Twixt—between.

Line 128. *Un-buckling helms*—trying to tear off each other's helmets.

Line 129. *And walked half dead with nothing*—and I woke up half dead with this imaginary encounter.

Line 130. *To Rome*—against Rome.

Line 131. *Muster*—assemble, especially troops. *All*—*i. e.* all able-bodied men.

Line 134. *O'er-beat*—everpower all that comes in our way.

Line 137. *Prepared against*—*i. e.* to make war upon.

Line 138. *You bless me, gods !*—*i. e.* gods have indeed conferred a great blessing on me !

Line 139. *Most absolute*—*i. e.* perfect and incomparable.

Note. Aufidius uses the expression "most absolute" in order to express his highest respect for Coriolanus. He (Aufidius) means of course, that Coriolanus is perfect in everything that is worthy of a man.

Lines 139—140. *If thou wilt have the leading of thine own revenges*—if you would like yourself to show the way in the execution of your own vengeance.

Line 141. *My commission*—the army which I am directed to lead. *And set down*—and dispose it.

Line 143. *Thine own ways*—in your own way.

Line 144. *Whether to knock against the gates of Rome*—whether to thunder at the gates of Rome.

Line 145. *Rudely*—roughly. *Them*=*i. e.* the Romans. *Parts remote*=outlying portions.

Line 146. *Fright*—frighten. *Ere destroy*—before destroying.

Line 147. *Commend*—introduce ; present. *To those*—*i. e.* to the Volscian lords.

Line 148. *Yea*—yes.

Line 150. *Yet Marcius, that was much*—yet my enmity against you was great ; yet it was not a slight enmity that existed between you and me.

Line 151. *A strange alternation*—a surprising c: ange.

Line 152. *By my hand*—(This is an oath meaning : I swear by my hand).

I had thought—I was intending.

Line 153. *Strucken him*—struck him. *Cudgel*—a short thick club (stick).

Lines. 153—154. *Yet my mind gave me*—yet I suspected ; yet I had a suspicion.

His clothes made a false report of him—his shabby dress gave a wrong idea of his real personality.

Lines 156—157. *As one would set up a top*—as a person would spin a top.

Line 160. *Methought*—it appeared to me.

Term—describe ; call.

Lines 161—163. *Would I were hanged, but I thought...... I could think*—may I be hanged, if I did not feel there was more in him than I was capable of thinking.

Line 164. *Simply*—in a word.

Line 165. *Rarest man*—the most wonderful man.

Line 167. *You wot one*—you know the one I mean.

Line 169. *Nay, it's no matter for that*—it does not matter to whom I refer.

Line 171. *Not so neither*—not so either.

Line 173. *Faith*—in faith ; in truth.

Lines 173—174. *One cannot tell how to say that*—it is difficult to find what to say about that.

Lines 179—180. *Let's partake*—let us share it.

Line 181. *I would not be a Roman, of all nations*—of all nations in the world, I would like to belong to any rather then the Roman.

Line 182. I *had as lieve be a condemned man*—I would be willing to be a man, condemned to death, rather than a Roman.

(*Lieve*=willing).

(*Had as lieve*=should hold as dear).

Line 183. *Wherefore*—why.

Line 184. *That was wont to*—who was accustomed to.

Line 185. *Thwack*—strike (with something flat).

Line 188. *Good enough for him*—a match for him.

Line 189. *We are fellows and friends*—*i. e.* we are fellow servants and good friends and we may say frankly among ourselves what we really believe.

Line 192. *He was too hard for him, directly*—without doubt, Coriolanus was more than a match for Aufidius,

Line 193. *He scotched him*—*i. e.* Coriolanus cut or slashed Aufidius.

Line 194. *Notched him*—made notches (V-shaped indentations in edge) in his body.

Carbonado—a piece of meat cut for broiling.

Line 195. *An he had been cannibally given*—if Coriolanus was inclined to eat haman fiesh like a cannibal (*i. e.* man-eater).

(*Given*=dis-posed ; inclined).

Line 196. *Broiled*—cooked (by direct exposure to an open fire).

Eaten him—eaten Aufidius.

Line 198. *He is so made on*—*i. e.* Coriolanus is made much of.

(*On*=of).

He is so made on here within—the Volscian nobles make so much of Coriolanus, at the dinner.

Line 199. *Mars*—the Roman god of war.

Line 201. *Stand bald before him*—stand bare-headed in his presence.

Lines 201—202. *Our general himself makes a mistress of him*—*i. e.* Aufidius himself bestows on him (Coriolanus) as much love, as he (Aufidius) would confer on his beloved.

Lines 202—203. *Sanctifies himself with's hand*—"considers the touch of his hand as holy."

Lines 203—204. *And turns up the white o' the eye to his discourse*—listens to his conversation with rapt attention. *The bottom of the news*—the conclusion of the news.

Line 205. *Is cut i' the middle*—*i. e.* his commission is halved ; he will command now half of the Volscian army.

Lines 206—207. *The other has half, by the entreaty and grant of the whole table*—all the Volscian nobles present at the dinner-table have granted Coriolanus an equal share in command with Aufidius, and have requested him to accept this offer.

Sowl—pull by the ears.

Line 208. *Rome gates*—gates of Rome.

Lines 208—209. *Mow all down*—kill or destroy all.
(*Mow*=reap).

Passage—*i.e.* way to Rome. *Polled*—cleared.
(*Polled*=shaven ; cropped)

Line 210. *As like*—as likely.

Line 214. *Durst not*—dare not.

Look you—mark.

Line 215. *Term it*—call it. *Whilst*—while.

Directitude—(it is a meaningless word ; perhaps the serving man means discreditude (dis-credit).

Lines 213—215. *Which friends, sir, as it were, he's in directitude*—Coriolanus' friends will not openly side with him, so long as he is in dis-credit.

Line 217. *They shall see*—*i. e.* Coriolanus' friends will see. *Crest*—head.

Line 218. *In blood*—either (*i*) in vigorous condition or (*ii*) with his blood up for fighting.

Lines 218—219 *They will out of their burrows*—they will come out of their holes.

(*Burrow*—hole excavated in the earth).

Cronies—rabbits.

And revel all with him—join him in the enjoyment of the fight.

(*Revel*=take delight in).

Line 221. *Presently*—immediately.

Line 223. *Parcel*—part. *To be executed*—to be put into effect.

Line 224. *They wipe their lips*—they rise from the dinner table.

Line 225. *Stirring*—exciting.

Line 226. *This peace is nothing*—this peace is good for nothing. *To rust iron*—to rust the swords.

Line 227. *Increase tailors*—to increase the number of tailors, because people have enough time to pay attention to their dress.

And breed ballad makers—and give rise to poets who compose songs.

Lines 228—229. *It exceeds peace*—it is superior to peace.

Spritely—full of spirit.

Walking—wide-awake.

Line 230. *Audible*—able to hear.

Full of vent—full of spirit, like strong wine.

Peace is a very apoplexy—peace is a complete apoplexy.

(*Apoplexy*=a disease in which the patient loses all power of feeling and movement).

Line 231. *Lethargy*—sleepiness. *Mulled*—deadened : dis-spirited.

Deaf—incapable of hearing. *Insensible*—incapable of feeling.

Line 223. *Reason*—the reason being.

Line 234. *The wars for my money*—I am all for war.

Line 235. *As cheap*—held in no more esteem. *They*—our masters.

Line 236. *In*—let us go into the house.

Act IV, Scene VI

I. Summary of the Scene :

The scene is a public place in Rome. Sicinius and Brutus discuss together the condition of Rome, in the absence of Coriolanus. They feel that Romans are now, leading a happier and a more peaceful life. Soon Menenius joins them. They tell him that Coriolanus is not missed by anybody except his friends, and that all is well with Rome. Menenius partly agrees with them. Sicinius inquires from Menenius the where-abouts of Coriolanus. Menenius informs him that neither he nor Coriolanus' wife and his mother have heard anything from him (Coriolanus).

Three or four citizens appear on the scene. They greet and thank both the tribunes and then depart. Sicinius observes that the citizens are now happy and contented. Brutus says

that Marcius was a worthy officer in the war, but very proud, self-centred and insolent. Menenius does not agree with this estimate of Coriolanus' character. Brutus remarks that Rome is safe and quiet in the absence of Coriolanus.

An Aedile calls on the tribunes and informs them that a slave whom he (the Aedile) has put in prison, has reported that the Volsces, with two different armies, have entered the Roman territories and destroyed everything maliciously. Menenius suggests that it is Aufidius, who, on learning Marcius' banishment, has declared war against Rome. Sicinius laughs away this suggestion. Brutus asks the Aedile to see that the slave is whipped, for spreading false rumours.

Presently, a messenger arrives there and says that the nobles have heard some fearful news and are all going to the senate-house. The messenger further says that, according to many persons in Rome, Marcius and Aufidius are leading an army against Rome, with a view to executing a fierce revenge. The tribunes refuse to believe this news.

Another messenger appears on the scene. He tells the tribunes that they are wanted at the senate house. He confirms the news that a fearful army commanded by Caius Marcius and Aufidius, is working havoc in Roman territories, and has already devastated the country like a flood.

Cominius enters now. Addressing the tribunes, he observes, that they have brought about a pretty state of affairs. He means, of course, that by banishing Coriolanus, they have invited sure dis-aster. Cominius says further that Coriolanus has joined the Volscians and is being worshipped like a god, and that he is killing Roman soldiers like butchers killing flies. Menenius accuses the tribunes and their followers, the Roman artisans, of endangering the security of Rome. Cominius remarks that Coriolanus carries everything before him. Menenius exclaims that they are all undone, unless Coriolanus should show them mercy. Cominius suggests that none in Rome can have any justification in asking Coriolanus to be merciful, and adds that the tribunes are responsible for this disaster. The latter plead not guilty to the charge.

A number of citizens enter now. Menenius accuses them of being instrumental in banishing Coriolanus, and suggests that they will have to pay for their guilt. The frightened citizens

disclaim all responsibility for Coriolanus' banishment, saying that they did not willingly banish him.

Cominius and Menenius depart. Sicinius asks the citizens to go home and show no sign of fear. In the absence of the citizens, Brutus wishes that this news should be un-true.

II. Main events in the scene :

1. The two tribunes discuss together how the Romans have been leading a quiet and happy life, since the banishment of Coriolanus.
2. Menenius joins them. In reply to Sicinius's question, Menenius tells him that the where-abouts of Coriolanus are not known.
3. An Aedile informs the tribunes that a slave has reported that the Volsces, with two different armies have invaded Roman territories.
4. Brutus asks the Aedile to whip the slave for spreading untrue rumours.
5. A messenger brings the news that Marcius and Aufidius are leading an army against Rome.
6. A second messenger confirms this news and informs the tribunes that they have been sent for by the senators at the senate-house.
7. Cominius arrives and still further confirms the news of the invasion of Roman territories by Marcius and Aufidius. He holds the tribunes responsible for this dis-aster.
8. The Tribunes refute this charge.
9. A number of citizens enter and are rebuked by Menenius for their part in the banishment of Coriolanus.
10. The citizens reply that they had regretted the banish-ment of Coriolanus, though they had agreed to banish him.
11. Menenius and Cominius depart.
12. The tribunes ask the citizens to go home and not to feel frightened.

III. Dramatic significance of the Scene :

This scene carries the plot forward like the previous one.

It marks "the highest point of Coriolanus' renewed fortunes." From this scene onwards, the dramatist concentrates on the personal conflict between Coriolanus and Rome.

This scene also reveals the effect of Coriolanus' plan on Rome. The nobles as well as the citizens tremble with fear on hearing the news, concerning Coriolanus' invasion of Roman territories. They fearfully anticipate the havoc which Coriolanus will work in Rome. Thus Cominius says to the tribunes :

He'll shake your Rome about your ears

To which Menenius adds :

As Hercules
Did shake down mellow fruit

Earlier Cominius paints a dark picture of the dis aster with which Rome is going to be confronted. He remarks :

Your temples burned in their cement, and
Your franchises, whereon you stood, confined
Into an auger's bore.

It is to be remembered that "the discomfiture of the tribunes is cumulative, being effected by four very different messengers".

However, it must be said to the credit of the tribunes that they do not lose their composure and maintain their dignity and self-respect. They advise the frightened citizens to go home and not to show any signs of fear.

This scene provides us with an excellent example of dramatic irony. Just when the tribunes are boasting that Romans are leading a happier and quieter life, after Coriolanud banishment and observe smugly : *we hear not of him, neithsr need we fear him,* news arrives that Coriolanus has workee, havoc in Roman territories and is soon going to invade Rome.

IV. Shakespeare's debt to North's Plutarch :

Shakespeare has modelled this scene on the hint given by Plutarch, concerning Coriolanus' invasion of the Roman territories.

Line 1. *Of him*—of Coriolanus.

Lines 2—3. *His remedies are tame i' the present peace and quietness of the people*—the means adopted by Coriolanus' friends to recall him, which were recently so vigorous, are now

very mild, in the present peaceful and quiet condition of the people.

(*His remedies*—the means that Coriolanus' friends tried to employ on his be-half).

Note. Some critics have explained the phrase : *his remedies* as : Coriolanus' means of remedying his wrongs.

It is, however, to be noted that *his* is used objectively here. It does not mean *the remedies Coriolanus would apply to the state of things,* but *the remedies which his friends tried to apply on behalf of Coriolanus.*

Lines 4—5. *Make his friends blush*—make Coriolanus' friends feel ashamed.

The world goes well—*i. e.* the affairs of Rome are prosperous.

Who rather had—who would prefer to.

Line 6. *Be-hold*—see.

Lines 7—9. *Dissentious numbers pestering streets than... ...functions friendly*—crowds of rebellious fellows encumbering streets, rather than see our traders singing in their shops and going about their proper business in a friendly manner.

(*Dissentious*—mutinous ; rebellious.

Pestering—crowding ; *Friendly*—in a friendly manner).

Line 10. *We stood to't*—we were firm (in our resolve to banish Coriolanus).

(*Stood to 't*—made a stand for it).

Line 11. *Most kind*—most courteous. *Of late*—recently.

Line 12. *Your Coriolanus*—*i. e.* Coriolanus of whom you were so proud.

Line 13. *But with his friends*—except by his friends.

(*With*=by).

Line 17. *He could have temporized*—he could have compromised ; he could have adapted himself to the circumstances.

Line 20. *God den*—good evening.

Line 23. *Are bound*—are under an obligation.

Thrive—flourish.

Line 24. *We wish'd*—we could wish.

Line 27. *Comely*—pleasant-looking.

Line 29. *Confusion*—destruction.

Line 30. *Insolent*—contemptuously rude.

Line 31. *Past all thinking*—beyond conception; more than would be conceived.

And affecting one sole throne—and aiming at absolute kingship.

Line 32. *Without assistance*—without colleagues; without assistants.

Line 34. *By this*—by this time.

To all our lamentation—to the grief of us all.

Line 35. *If he had gone forth consul*—if he had been allowed to become consul.

Line 37. *Found*—have found.

Still—peaceful.

Line 39. *Reports*—who reports.

Several powers—separate armies.

Line 40. *In*—into.

Line 41. *The deepest malice of the war*—the bitterest hatred of which war is capable.

Line 44. *Thrusts forth*—pushes forward.

Line 45. *Were in-shell'd*—were withdrawn as into a shell.

Note. The metaphor is from a snail who withdraws his horns into his shell.

Marcius stood for Rome—Marcius stood up for Rome; stood up in defence of Rome.

Line 46 *What talk you*—why do you mention?

Line 48. *This rumourer*—this spreader of rumours; this man who spreads rumours.

Line 49. *Break with us*—quarrel with us; break their treaty of peace with us.

Line 51. *Hath been*—have occurred.

Line 52. *Within my age*—in my life-time.

Reason with the fellow—talk with and inquire of this fellow.

Line 54. *Shall chance*—may happen.

Your information—your source of information ; the person who brings you this information.

Line 55. *Bids beware*—bids to beware.

Line 56. *To be dreaded*—to be feared.

Tell not me—don't tell me such nonsense.

Line 58. *Earnestness*—anxiety.

Line 60. *That turns their countenance*—that makes them look sour and gloomy.

(*Turns*=makes them look sour).

Lines 60—61. *'Tis this slave......his raising*—it is this slave's invention ; this commotion is raised by this slave.

Line 63. *Seconded*—supported, confirmed by other people.

Lines 63—64. *And more, more fearful, is deliver'd*—and more terrible reports are announced.

(*Deliver'd*=reported ; announced).

Line 66. *How probable I do not know*—though I cannot say how far it is probable.

Line 67. *Leads a power*—leads an army.

Lines 68—69. *As spacious as between the...........oldest thing*—wide enough to include all, from the youngest to the oldest.

This is most likely !—(Sicinius says this ironically).

Line 70. *Raised only*—*i. e.* this report has been raised only.

The weaker sort—*i. e.* the weak-hearted persons.

Line 71. *The very trick on't*—that is the device they had in view while raising this report.

Line 73. *Can no more atone*—can never be at one ; can no more be friends ; can no more be reconciled.

Line 74. *Violentest contrariety*—things which are most completely opposed (like sworn enemies).

(*Contrariety*—contrary things).

Line 76. *Fearful*—terrible.

Associated—who is in joint command with.

Line 78. *Have*—has (or probably the two armies commanded by Aufidius and Coriolanus *have*).

Line 79. *Have o'er-borne their way*—carried everything before them like a flooded river.

And took—*i. e.* and have taken.

Line 91. *You have made good work*—*i. e.* you have brought about a fine state of affairs.

Note. Cominius, here accuses the Tribunes of being responsible for Coriolanus' banishment and for his inte ded attack on Rome.

Line 82. *Have holp*—have helped.

Line 83. *City leads*—the leaden roofs of the houses.

Pates=tops of the heads.

Line 84. *To your noses*—before your faces.

Line 86. *Burned in their cement*—as they stand held together by their cement.

Line 87. *Franchise*—liberties.

Whereon you stood=about which you were so stubborn; on which you insisted so much.

Lines 87—88. *Confined into an auger's bore*—narrowed down to nothing; reduced to nothing.

(*Auger's bore*=the small hole made by an auger *i.e.* awl).

Line 90. *If Marcius should be join'd with Volscians*—if it should be true that Marcius has become an ally of Volscians.

Line 91. *He is their god*—the Volscians worship him like a god.

Lines 91—92. *Like a thing made by some other deity than nature*—*i. e.* like a person of supernatural make.

(*Deity*=god).

Line 94. *Brats*—children.

Against us brats—against us, who are like children as compared with enthusiastic Volscian soldiers led by Coriolanus.

Line 97. *Your apron-men*—the mechanics who are your followers.

You that stood so much—you who made so much of.

Line 98. *The voice of occupation*—the opinions and demands of working men.

(*Occupation*=men engaged in occupations).

Line 99. *The breath of garlic-eaters*—the opinion of the common people who eat such an offensive thing as garlic.

Lines 100—101. *As Hercules did shake down mellow fruit* (the reference is to one of the twelve tasks that Hercules was called upon to perform by Eurystheus.)

Hercules was required to pluck the golden apples from the garden of Hesperides, guarded by a dragon.

Lines 102—103. *You'll look pale before you find it other*—you will have pale faces, owing to fear, before you find it to be otherwise.

(*Other*=otherwise).

Regions—districts of neighbouring country.

Line 104. *Do similingly revolt*—are only too willing or happy to revolt.

Who resist—those who resist.

Lines 104—106. *And who resist.. ....constant fools*—and those who resist are sneered at for their foolish exhibition of heroism, and are rewarded for their stupid constancy by being killed ; "those who make a stand against him are mocked for knowing no better, and die confirmed in their folly."

Line 107. *Your enemies and his—i.e.* the Volscians who are your enemies and who were Coriolanus' enemies too when he had not been banished.

Find something in him—have discovered merit in Coriolanus, which you could not dis-cover.

Line 108. *All undone*—wholly ruined.

Line 109. *The noble man—i.e.* Coriolanus.

Have mercy—should have mercy.

Who shall ask it—who will dare to appeal to him for mercy.

Line 110. *For shame*—on account of shame.

Line 111. *Deserve such pity of him—i.e.* deserve as little pity from him.

Line 112. *For his best friends*—as regards his best friends.

Line 113. *They charged him*—they would be urging him.

Line 114. *As those should do that had deserved his hate*—*i.e.* with no better justification than that of those who had deserved his hatred.

(*Hate*=hatred).

Line 115. *And therein show'd like enemies*—and in that would appear to be his enemies.

Line 116. *The brand*—the lighted torch.

Line 117. *Consume*—burn. *I have not*—I should not have.

Line 118. *You have made fair hands*—you have made a nice business ; you have done good work.

(*Hands*=work ; business).

Line 119. *Your crafts*—your craftsmen.

You have crafted fair—you have done a fine piece of work.

Line 120. *Trembling*—trembling with fear.

Line 121. *Help*—cure.

Lines 120—121. *Such as was never so incapable of help*—this trembling is more incapable of being cured than any other trembling ever was.

Line 123. *Clusters*—crowds.

Line 125. *They'll roar him in again*—they will shout with pain at his return.

Line 126. *The second name of men*—the man second in heroism to Coriolanus.

Obeys his points—follows Coriolanus' instructions.

(*Points*=signal given by notes on a trumpet).

Line 127. *Desperation*—despair.

Lines 127—129. *Desperation is all the policy.............. against them*—all our policy, our strength and means of defence are mere despair.

Line 130. *And is Aufidius with him*—(this is addressed to Cominius).

Line 132. *Stinking*—emitting a strong, offensive smell.

Hooting—shouting.

Lines 134—135. *And not a hair upon a soldier's head ......prove a whip*—every hair on the heads of his soldiers will prove a whip to you.

Coxcombs—heads.

Line 136. *Will he trumble down*—will he strike off.

Line 137. *Pay you*—requite you.

For your voices—for your votes ; for your voting for his banishment.

Line 138. *If he could burn us all into one coal*—if he could burn us all so that we should become one burning mass or heap.

Line 139. *We have deserved it*—it will serve us right.

Lines 145—146 *Though we willingly consented to his banishment..............our will*—though we agreed to his banishment at the instance of the tribunes, we did so against our inclinations.

Ye're goodly things—*i.e.* you are wonderful people (said ironically).

You voices—you who are voices and nothing more, you who are always ready to shout.

Lines 148. *Cry*—pack of dogs.

Shall's—shall us *i e.* shall we.

Shall's to the Capitol—shall we go to the Capitol ?

Line 149. *What else*—what else can be done ?

Line 150. *Be not dis-may'd*—don't be filled with fear.

Line 151. *A side*—a party.

Line 155. *Let's home*—let us go home.

Lines 160—161. *Would half my wealth would buy this for a lie*—I would willingly part with half of my wealth to find that this news was untrue.

———

Act IV, Scene VII

I. Summary of the Scene :

This scene takes place at the Volscian camp near Rome.

Aufidius asks his Lieutenant if the Volscian soldiers still prefer Coriolanus to him (Aufidius). The lieutenant informs him that the soldiers have fallen under the spell of Coriolanus, who

has completely eclipsed Aufidius. He (the Lieutenant) further wishes that Aufidius had not shared his command with Coriolanus.

Aufidius remarks that he will level serious charges against Coriolanus, when the latter will be called upon to justify his conduct.

The Lieutenant wants to know from Aufidius whether Coriolanus shall be able to capture Rome. Aufidius observes that all places yield to Coriolanus even before he besieges them. The Roman nobility, the Roman senators and patricians love him and the Tribunes are poor soldiers.

Aufidius then suggests that Coriolanus suffers from many defects, such as pride, want of judgment and choler, and this is the reason, why he was hated and banished by the Roman citizens. These same defects will bring about his down-fall.

Aufidius predicts that when Coriolanus has captured Rome, the latter would be at his mercy, and will be destroyed by him.

II. Main events in the Scene :

1. Aufidius's Lieutenant informs him that the Volscian soldiers are enamoured of Coriolanus.
2. He further suggests that Aufidius has been eclipsed by Coriolanus.
3. Aufidius says that when Coriolanus will settle his account, serious charges will be levelled against him.
4. Aufidius informs the lieutenant that Coriolanus will capture Rome.
5. Aufidius predicts that Coriolanus will be destroyed by the former, when the latter has taken Rome.

III. Dramatic Significance of the Scene :

This scene confirms Aufidius as the villain of the piece. His former jealously re-asserts itself and he begins to contemplate Coriolanus' down-fall and death. He speculates that Coriolanus' inherent defects—his pride and arrogance—will bring about his ruin. He, thus, cleverly disguises his evil motives and makes us feel, as if Coriolanus' nature rather than Aufidius's jealousy, will lead Coriolanus to his inevitable doom.

This scene presents a sharp contrast to Act IV, Scene V, in which Aufidius accords a warm reception to Coriolanus and

promises half of his command to him. This scene (Act IV, Scene VII) reveals that Aufidius's generosity is short-lived. Essentially, Aufidius is a jealous man who can never put up with his rival's glory. He is a victim of the inferiority complex and Coriolanus' popularity is an eternal eyesore to him.

This scene foreshadows Coriolanus' down-fall and prepares us for the coming events. We can very well anticipate that besides his pride and his attachment to his mother, Aufidius's jealousy would be the cause of Coriolanus' destruction.

It is also to be noted that Aufidius gives us a kind of summary of Coriolanus' career, towards the end of the scene. Aufidius's analysis of Coriolanus' character is as correct as it is searching. He (Aufidius) is, no doubt, a shrewd judge of human character, and a much better diplomat than Coriolanus.

IV. Shakespeare's debt to Plutarch :

Shakespeare has utilised two hints given by Plutarch, in constructing this scene. First, that Coriolanus captured many Roman towns. Secondly, that Aufidius grew jealous of Coriolanus' popularity and glory.

We quote below a short passage from Norths' Plutarch referring to the second of these hints :—

"Among those (who were jealous of Coriolanus), Tullus Aufidius was chief......and it grieved him to see his own reputation blemished through Marcius' great fame and honour, and so himself to be bess esteemed of the Volsces than he was before."

Line 1. *They*—*i. e.* the Volscian soldiers. *To the Roman* —*i. e.* to Coriolanus.

Line 2. *Witchcraft*—fascination.

Lines 3—4. *Your soldiers use him as the grace......at end* —the Volscian soldiers talk of Coriolanus in the beginning, middle and end of their meals. They discuss him instead of saying grace before and after their meals.

(*Grace*=prayer for blessing at a meal. *'Fore*=before. *Meat*=meals.)

Line 5. *You are darken'd*—your fame is eclipsed.

Line 6. *By your own*—by your own soldiers.

Lines 7—8. *Unless, by using means, I lame the foot of our*

design—except by employing means which will cripple our purpose.

(*Foot*=pace ; progress. *Our design*=our cause).

More proudlier—more proudly.

Line 9. *Even to my person*—even to me personally.

Lines 10–11. *His nature in that's no changeling*—his nature is not one that is liable to change ; he is not inconsistent in his nature.

Note : Aufidius means that Coriolanus is consistently proud.

(*Changeling*=a child substituted by the fairies for another child).

Line 12. *What*—that which.

Amended—improved upon ; corrected.

Line 13. *For your particular*—for your own self ; for your own sake.

Line 15. *Had borne the action of yourself*—had conducted the expedition single-handed.

(*Of yourself*=entirely by yourself).

Line 18. *When he shall come to his account*—when we shall render an account of his conduct.

Line 19. *What I can urge against him*—*i.e.* what charges I can level against him.

Line 21. *To the vulgar eye*—in the eyes of the common people.

(*Vulgar*=common).

He bears all things fairly—conducts all affairs in an honourable manner.

Line 22. *Good husbandry*—good care ; due regard for the welfare of.

Volscian state—Volscian govern-ment.

Line 23. *Achieve*—succeed in his intention.

Line 25. *Break his neck*—cost him his life.

Hazard mine—expose my life to the danger of death.

Line 26. *We come to our account*—we face the day of reckoning (final settlement).

Line 27. *Carry Rome*—take or capture Rome.

Line 28. *He sits down—i.e.* he commences to lay siege.

Line 29. *Are his*—are on his side.

Line 32. *In the repeal*—in recalling him to Rome.

Line 33. *Expel*—banish. *Thence*—from there ; (from Rome).

Line 34. *The osprey*—("the osprey is a fish-eating bird. It was believed that the fish were so fascinated at the sight of an osprey that they turned up their bellies to be more easily eaten").

Lines 34—35. *Who takes it by sovereignty of nature*—which catches the fish on which it feeds by the superior power that nature has given it.

Lines 36—37. *But he could not carry his honours even*—but he could not bear his honours with a balanced mind.

Line 38. *Out of daily fortune*—arising from constant good fortune.

Line 39. *The happy man*—the fortunate man.

Defect—lack ; want.

Line 40. *To fail in disposing of*—in failing to exploit.

Lines 40—41. *Chances which he was lord of—i.e.* advantages that he possessed.

Lines 41—42. *Or whether nature not to be other than one thing*—or whether it was his natural bent of mind, which must remain the same, always.

(Aufidius means that Coriolanus, being essentially proud, could not change his nature).

Lines 42—43. *Not moving from the casque to the cushion*—unable to adjust himself from war to peace. (Coriolanus could not change his attitude when he laid aside his casque and sat on a cushioned seat).

Note. "Casque" means helmet and signifies war ; 'cushion' means a cushioned seat in the Capitol, and stands for peace.

Lines 43—45. *But commanding peace even with........... the war*—Coriolanus dealt with the problems of peace in the same commanding manner, as he used in dealing with those of war.

(*Austerity and garb*=austere garb ; severe manner).

One of these—one of these faults.

Note. The faults mentioned by Aufidius are :

(*i*) Coriolanus' pride ;

(*ii*) Coriolanus' lack of judgment.

(*iii*) Coriolanus' un-yielding nature.

(*iv*) Coriolanus' inability to adapt himself to the times of peace.

Line 46. *Spices of them all*—touches of all these defects.

Not all—*i.e.* not fully developed faults.

Line 47. *For I dare so far free him*—I dare acquit him to that extent.

Lines 47—48. *Made him fear'd.........................so banished*—as he was feared, he was hated, and as he was hated, he was banished.

Lines 48—49. *He has a merit to choke it in the utterance*—"he has a merit for no other purpose than to destroy it by boasting it" (Johnson). (Another explanation that has been offered is : "every great gift he has is ruined by being pushed too far.")

Lines 49—50. *So our virtues lie in the interpretation of the time*—"our virtues depend upon the manner in which we interpret and adapt ourselves to surrounding circumstances."

"Our virtues are only virtues if we make a right use of them in the circumstances of the time."

Lines 51—53. *And power, unto itself most commendable ....what it hath done*—power, however praiseworthy in its own estimate, has no surer means of destruction than the position of eminence, from where it boasts its deeds.

(A powerful man is sure to lose his reputation if he boasts of it when he occupies an exalted position).

Commendable—praise-worthy. *Tomb*—grave. *Chair*—an exalted position. *Extol*—praise. *What it hath done*—*i.e.* the brave deeds performed by it.

Line 54. *One fire drives out one fire, one nail, one nail*—(Aufidius is, here, thinking of ousting Coriolanus. The former suggests that just as one fire drives out another, and one nai another nail, similarly he will get the better of Coriolanus).

Line 55. *Rights by rights falter, strengths by strengths do fail*—rights give way to other rights and strengths are caused to fail by other strengths.

("Aufidius is thinking of the conquest of Coriolanus' rights and strengths by his own").

Line 46. *Let's away*—let us go. *Rome is thine*—you have conquered Rome.

Line 57. *Thou art poor'st of all*—You will be the lowest of all ; your fortunes will be at their lowest ebb.

Art thou mine—you will be at my mercy.

———

Act V, Scene I

I. Summary of the Scene :

This scene takes place at a public place in Rome. The tribunes try to persuade Menenius to go to Coriolanus in order to plead the cause of Rome. He refuses to go, saying that Cominius who had gone earlier, had not been received well and had to return home a dis-appointed man. Cominius confirms this statement. He remarks that Coriolanus is immovable. Menenius accuses the tribunes of having brought about a pretty state of affairs. Th latter ask him not to reproach them in their hour of misfortune. Menenius once again refuses to go.

The tribunes flatter his vanity and assure him that Rome will thank him for his efforts.

Menenius, ultimately, agrees to approach Coriolanus. The former suggests that he will contact Coriolanus, when the latter has taken his dinner and is in a mood to entertain his request. The tribunes approve of his plan. Menenius then departs.

Cominius predicts that Coriolanus will not listen to Menenius. He (Cominius) feels that the only persons who can persuade Coriolanus are Volumnia and Virgilia, who already mean to request him (Coriolanus) to show mercy to Rome. Cominius suggests that the tribunes and he should go to the ladies (Volumnia and Virgilia) and request them to expedite their departure.

II. Main events in the Scene :

1. The tribunes request Menenius to go and plead for Rome with Coriolanus.
2. He refuses to go saying that since Cominius' embassy has failed, the second embassy is not likely to succeed.
3. Cominius supports Menenius.

   The tribunes flatter Menenius's vanity.

5. Ultimately, Menenius agrees to lead the second embassy.
6. He departs.
7. In his absence, Cominius remarks that Menenius's embassy will also fail and that the only two persons who can parsuade Coriolanus are Volumnia and Virgilia.

III. Dramatic significance of the Scene :

The main purpose of this scene is to acquaint us with the failure of Cominius's embassy and the preparation for the second one, led by Menenius. The dramatic purpose served by this scene as well as the next is to heighten the effect of the third scene, in which Volumnia successfully pleads with her son. Coriolanus' stubbornness, as it is exhibited in the first two scenes of Act V, enables us, to appreciate the power of natural affection in the third scene.

This scene, like many a previous one, keeps Coriolanus before us—a Coriolanus who is transformed beyond recognition. Referring to the remarkable change that has come over Coriolanus, Cominius says :

He does sit in gold, his eye
Red as 'twould burn Rome ; and his injury
The gaoler to his pity.

This scene also reveals how the Tribunes are better judges of human character than Menenius. They flatter his vanity with success. For example Sicinius says to him :

But, sure, if you
Would be your country's pleader, your good tongue.
More than the instant army we can make,
Might stop our countryman.

Menenius' observation that Coriolanus will relax under the influence of the comfortable effect of a good dinner, is perfectly in character. According to Warburton, "This remark admirably befits the mouth of one, who in the beginning of the play had told us that he loved convivial doings."

IV. Shakespeare's debt to North's Plutarch :

In this scene, Shakespeare has expanded Plutarch's suggestion that "the ambassadors sent were Coriolanus' familiar friends and acquaintances."

Shakespeare departs from Plutarch in mentioning that Coriolanus dis-missed Cominius politely. In Plutarch Coriolanus grants Rome a respite of thirty days, at the instance of the first embassy.

Line 1. *He—i.e.* Cominius.

Note. Cominius was the first ambassador who had gone to Coriolanus, but who had failed to persuade him (Coriolanus) to give up the sack of Rome.

Line 2. *Which was*—who was (Cominius who was).

Sometime—formerly ; a short time back ; once.

His general—i.e. Coriolanus' general.

Line 3. *In a most dear particular*—with a strong personal affection.

Line 4. *But what o' that*—but that does not matter. *You—i.e.* the tribunes.

Lines 5–6. *And knee the way into his mercy*—and proceed on your knees and in that humiliating condition, persuade him to be merci-ful.

Nay—no. *He coy'd*—he disdained ; he was reluctant to.

Line 7. *I'll keep at home*—I will stay at home ; I will not go to him.

Line 8. *Know me*—recognise me.

Line 9. *Yet one time*—yet once.

Line 10. *I urged our old acquaintance*—I referred to our long years of friendship.

The drops—i.e. the drops of blood.

Lines 11–12. *Coriolanus he would not answer to*—he would not admit that the title of Coriolanus belonged to him ; he dis-owned the title, Coriolanus.

Line 13. *Title-less*—without any title.

Lines 14–15. *Till he had forged himself a name o' the fire of burning Rome*—till he had fashioned for himself a new title by the burning of Rome (as he had done by capturing Coroli).

Line 15. *You have made good work*—you (the Tribunes) have brought about a pretty state of affairs.

Line 16. *A pair of tribunes*—two tribunes *i.e.* Brutus and Sicinius.

Have racked—had made violent efforts for (This is said ironically).

Line 17. *Coals*—charcoals.

To make coals cheap—to cheapen the rate of charcoal.

(Menenius means, of course, that charcoal will become cheap when Rome is burning. This will happen when Coriolanus sets fire to Rome).

A noble memory—a noble memorial.

Line 18. *Minded him*—reminded him ; called to his mind.

Royal—kingly.

Line 20. *Bare*—mere ; poor ; meagre ; bare of any explanation or apology.

It was a bare petition of a state—this petition made by Rome simply begged for mercy, it did not ask Coriolanus' pardon or recall him home.

Line 21. *To one*—to a person.

Line 23. *I offer'd*—I tried ; I attempted.

Line 24. *For's*—for his.

Lines 25—26. *He could not stay to pick them in a pile of noisome musty chaff*—he could not pause to save his few friends out of the large number of his enemies, as a person would pick a few good grains from a heap of foul and decaying chaff.

(*Stay*=pause. Pile=heap. *Noisome*=foul. Musty=decaying).

'Twas folly—it was foolish.

Line 27. *For*—for the sake of. *To leave un-burnt*—to leave un-burnt the chaff.

Line 28. *To nose the offence*—to smell the offending matter.

(*Nose*=smell. *Offence*=the offending matter).

Lines 26—28. *'Twas folly for one poor grain or two...... nose the offence*—it would be foolish to leave the heap of chaff un-burnt, for the sake of a few grains and so to put up with its offensive smell. (In other words, it would be foolish not to destroy Rome for the sake of one or two friends.)

Line 30. *This brave fellow*—i.e. Cominius.

Line 31. *Musty*—decaying (having a stale odour or taste).

Lines 31—32. *And you are smelt above the moon*—and the offensive smell given out by you goes up to the skies.

Line 34. *In this so never-needed help*—in this emergency, in which we need help as we never needed it before; at this time when help was needed so much.

Line 35. *Upbraid*—rebuke.

Distress—misfortune.

Line 37. *More than the instant army we can make*—more than the army we can raise at the moment.

Line 38. *Our countryman*—i.e. Coriolanus.

I'll not meddle—I will not intervene.

Line 39. *What should I do*?—what could I possibly do?

Line 40. *Make trial*—try.

Line 41. *Towards Marcius*—with Marcius.

Note. "Towards" may be connected with *do* or with *your love*. Thus this line may mean (*i*) what your love can do towards Marcius or (*ii*) what your love towards Marcius can do.

And say—and suppose.

Line 42. *Return me*—i.e. should send me back.

Lines 42—44. *What then? but as a discontented friend ......his unkindness*—there would be no other result than that I should return as a friend whose request was rejected and whose soul was hurt by his un-kindness.

(*Grief-shot*=grief stricken).

Lines 46—47. *That thanks from Rome, after the measure as you intended well*—thanks in proportion to your good intentions.

Line 48. *To bite his lip*—the fact that he bit his lip (to show his contempt).

Line 49. *Hum*—put off. *Un-hearts me*—disheartens me.

Line 50. *He was not taken well*—Coriolanus was not approached at the favourable moment.

Line 51. *Unfill'd*—being not filled.

Line 52. *We pout upon the morning*—we are out of sympathy with everything that happens during the morning.

Are un-apt—are not inclined.

Line 53. *These pipes and these conveyances*—the veins.

(*Conveyances*=containers).

Line 55. *Feeding*—food. *Suppler*—more flexible ; less stubborn or un-yielding.

Line 57. *Be dieted to my request*—made willing by food to listen to my request.

Line 58. *I'll set upon him*—I will invade him with entreaties.

Line 59. *The very road*—the right way ; the exact way.

Line 60. *Cannot lose your way*—cannot fail to reach his heart.

Prove—try ; make a trial of.

Line 61. *Speed how it will*—whatever success it may have. *Ere long*—soon.

Lines 61—62. *Have knowledge of my success*—know what the result will be.

Line 63. *He does sit in gold*—he sits in state ; he sits enthroned in awful splendour.

Line 64. *As 't would*—as if it would.

Lines 64—65. *His injury the gaoler to his pity*—his sense of wrong preven ed him from showing pity ; the wrongs done to him prevented him from feeling any pity.

Line 67. *With his speechless hand*—with a sign of his hand, without speaking.

Lines 67—69. *What he would do......yield to his conditions*—he sent in writing what he would do and what he would not do ; being bound by an oath to the Volscians to stick to the conditions that he suggested.

Note. *Bound with an oath*—may mean also 'bound by an oath to fulfil the terms on which he had made alliance with the Volscians'.

Line 71. *Unless*—except.

Unless his noble mother and his wife—i.e. the mother and wife of Coriolanus are the only hope of Rome.

Line 72. *Solicit*—address entreaties to.

Line 73. *Let, hence*—let us go away from here.

Line 74. *Entreaties*—prayers. *Haste*—hasten.

Act V, Scene II.

I. Summary of the Scene :

Menenius, who has come to plead for Rome, with Coriolanus, is stopped at the entrance to the Volscian camp, by the two guards. He is told that he cannot speak to Coriolanus. Menenius pleads that he has been a great friend and supporter of Coriolanus, and that as such, he should be allowed to pass. The guards refuse to allow him to enter the camp and ask him to go back to Rome.

Presently Coriolanus and Aufidius enter. Menenius tells the guards that they will be severely taken to task by Coriolanus for their preventing him (Menenius) from entering the camp.

Menenius then approaches Coriolanus and implores the latter not to destroy Rome He makes a piteous appeal to Coriolanus' sense of mercy. The latter asks him to go away. He (Coriolanus) informs Menenius that though the former's revenge is his own particular affair, the power to pardon Rome lies with the Volsces. Melting a little, Coriolanus gives Menenius a letter and refuses to listen to another word from him.

Coriolanus and Aufidius then depart.

In their absence the two Volscian guards make fun of Menenius. They refer to the cold reception that he has been accorded by Coriolanus. Menenius holds the two guards in contempt and asks them to go away. He leaves, then. The first guard calls him a noble fellow. The second guard remarks that Coriolanus, their general, is a worthy fellow, because he is firm like a rock.

II. Main events in the Scene :

1. Menenius is not allowed by the two Volscian guards to enter the Volscian camp.
2. He describes himself as a great friend and supporter of Coriolanus and wishes to be admitted.

3. The guards refuse to listen to him.
4. Coriolanus, accompanied by Aufidius, appears on the scene.
5. Menenius tells the guards that they will be punished by Coriolanus, for their rudeness to him (Menenius).
6. Menenius makes a piteous appeal to Coriolanus to spare Rome.
7. Coriolanus tells him that the power to pardon Rome lies with the Volscians.
8. He gives Menenius a letter and asks him to go away.
9. Coriolanus and Aufidius depart.
10. The two guards make fun of Menenius.
11. He returns mockery for mockery.

III. Dramatic significance of the Scene

The subject of this scene is the failure of the second Roman embassy. Menenius, who has been holding Coriolanus in great affection, pleads with the latter for Rome. He employs all his wit and tact to win over Coriolanus, but fails to move the latter. "He (Menenius) neither hesitates nor calculates. Eloquence overflows in affection and tears". He, however, soon discovers, to his great dis-may, that he is addressing a changed, distant, and hostile Coriolanus. The latter's one-word response "away" comes to him (Menenius) like a bolt from the blue. No wonder, that he staggers under it.

The dramatic purpose of this scene, as also of the previous one, is to bring out the mighty power of natural affection in the third scene. In other words, Coriolanus' immovability in the first two scenes makes Volumnia's triumph all the more impressive, when she is able to vanquish the great conqueror.

This scene reveals how Coriolanus, in order to gratify his instinct of revenge, bids good-bye to all the finer feelings and turns his back on old ties, so much so that he greets his former friend and supporter with :

That we have been familiar,
Ingrate forgetfulness shall poison, rather
Than pity note how much. Therefore be gone.

This scene also provides us with some humour when the

two guards make fun of Menenius and he pays back mockery, with mockery.

IV. Shakespeare's debt to North's Plutarch.

This scene is entirely Shakespeare's invention. Shakespeare did not find any hint for it in North's Plutarch.

Stage direction : *Sentinels*—soldiers stationed as guards.

Line 1. *Stay*—stop *Whence are you* ?—from where do you come ?

Line 2. *You guard like men*—you keep good watch. *By your leave*—excuse me.

Line 3. *I am an officer of state*—*i.e.* I am a Roman ambassador.

Line 4. *From whence* ?—from which place ?

Line 6. *From thence*—from that place.

Line 7. *Your Rome embraced with fire*—*i. e.* your Rome burning.

Line 8. *Good my friends*—my good friends.

Line 10. *It is lots to blanks*—(I would wager anything).

Note. The lots are the prizes in a lottery ; the blanks are blank papers which carry no prizes. Thus Menenius means that the chances are in proportion to the relative value of the prizes and the blanks.

Line 11. *My name hath touch'd your ears*—*i.e.* you have heard my name.

Lines 12–13. *Virtue*—efficacy.

The virtue of your name is not here passable—Your name is not strong enough to secure you admittance.

Line 14. *My lover*—my dear or close friend.

Line 15. *The book*—the chronicle ; record.

Whence—out of which.

Haply amplified—perhaps a little exaggerated.

Line 16. *Magnified*—made out to be great.

Line 17. He's—*i. e.* Coriolanus is.

Lines 17–18. *With all the size that verity would without lapsing suffer*—so for as it was possible without falling into false-hood.

(*Verity*=truth. *Lapsing*=lapsing into false-hood. *Suffer*=allow)

Line. 20. *Subtle ground*—smooth and deceptive ground.

Line 21. *I have tumbled past the throw*--I have over-shot the mark ; I have sent the bowl farther than I intended.

Note I. Menenius means that while praising Coriolanus, he could not restrain himself and has often said more than he meant to.say—just as a smooth and tricky ground makes a bowler shoot beyond the mark.

Note. II. The reference is to the game of bowls—an outdoor game of rolling balls toward a "jack" or target.

Lines 21--22. *In his praise have almost stamp'd the leasing*—while praising him, I have given the stamp of truth to my lying. I have given un-truth the stamp of truth.

(*Leasing*=lying).

Line 23. *Faith*--in fact.

Line 29. *Factionary on the party of your general*----*i.e.* I always have been taking the side of your general in a quarrel.

Line 30. *Howsoever you have been his liar*—whatever lie you might have told on his behalf.

(*However*=whatever).

Line 38. *Out your gates*--out of your gates.

Line 39. *Violent popular ignorance*--an out-break of the ignorance of the common people.

Line 40. *Given your enemy—i. e.* handed over to the Volscians. *Your shield—i. e.* Coriolanus, who was to the Romans what the shield is to the body.

To front--to confront ; to face.

Line 41. *Easy*--that come easily.

Line 42. *Virginal palms*—the hands of maidens held out in entreaty.

Palsied--tremulous.

Line 43. *Intercession*--the act of mediation between two contending parties ; pleading.

Dotant--dotard ; a foolish old man.

Lines 44—45. *The intended fire your city is ready to flame in*—the fire which is, in the near future, to be set to your city.

Line 46. *Back to*—go back to.

Line 48. *Out of*—beyond the possibility of.

Reprieve—the act of suspending or delaying the execution of a criminal.

Line 50. *Sirrah*—(a contemptuous form of address).

Note. It is a form of the word 'sir' used in a contemptuous manner.

Line 51. *Estimation*—respect.

Line 55. *I let forth your half-pint of bolod*—I shed the little blood you have left in your veins.

(*Pint*=measure of capacity for liquids, one eighth of a gallon).

Line 56. *That's the utmost of your having*—that is all you will get.

Line 59. *You companion*—you fellow.

Lines 59—60. *I'll say an errand for you*—Either (*i*) I will tell him something about your behaviour ; or (*ii*) I will give him the message you would not give.

I am in estimation—I am held in esteem.

Line 61. *Perceive*—see ; mark *A Jack guardant*—a rescally sentinel.

Note. "Jack" is a term of contempt.

Lines 61—62. *Cannot office me*—cannot keep me by your officious behaviour.

Lines 62—63. *My entertainment with him*—the manner in which he receives me.

Lines 63—64. *If thou standest not i' the state of hanging*—if you are not in a fair way to be hanged.

Or some death more long in spectatorship—or some other form of death which will afford the spectators a prolonged enjoyment of your agony.

Line 65. *Presently*—immediately.

Line 66. *Swoon*—faint away.

Line 67. *Sit in hourly synod*—meet to-gether every hour. (*Synod*=assembly).

Particular—individual.

Line 70. *Look thee*—look thou. *Here's water*—*i. e.* here are my tears.

Line 71. *I was hardly moved*—I was persuaded with difficulty.

Line 72. *Move thee*—touch your heart.

Line 73. *Your gates*—(Menenius suggests that Rome is still Coriolanus' city.)

Line 74. *Conjure thee*—implore you.

Petitionary—imploring.

Line 75. *Assuage*—lessen ; make less.

Wrath—anger.

Line 76. *The dregs of it*—what is left of your anger.

Varlet—low fellow.

Line 77. *A block*—(*i*) a blockhead (idiot), (*ii*) a block of wood or stone (an impediment).

Access—approach.

Line 81. *Are servanted*—are made the servant of.

Lines 81—82. *Though I owe my revenge properly*—although the revenge I seek is my own personal concern.

Lines 82—83. *My remission lies in Volscian breasts*—any mercy that I can show depends on the will of the Volscians.

Lines 83—85. *That we have been familiar.........than pity note how much*—un-grateful forgetfulness shall destroy the memory of our former friendship, rather than pity induce me to remember how intimate it was.

(*Ingrate*=Un-grateful).

Be gone—go away.

Line 86. *Suits*—petitions.

Line 87. *Force*—army. *For*—since ; because.

Line 88. *Writ it*—wrote it.

Line 91. *Was my beloved*—was my beloved friend.

Yet thou behold'st—yet you see how little I care for this fact.

Line 92: *You keep a constant temper*—you act with firmness in fidelity to your promise.

Line 94. *Spell*—charm.

'Tis a spell, you see, of much power—your name casts a a powerful spell (This is said ironically).

Lines 94—95. *You know the way home again*—the only result of your interview is that you retrace your steps homeward.

Line 96. *Shent*—re-buked : reproached : scolded.

Line 97. *Your greatness*—such a great man as you.

Lines 98—99. *What cause, do you think, I have to swoon*—I have a great reason to faint as you predicted.

Line 101. *For such things*—as for such things.

There's any—there are anyone (who would care).

Line 102. *Ye're so slight*—you are so insignificant.

To die by himself—to die by his own act (to die by committing suicide).

Line 104. *Be that you are, long*—you may long remain miserable wretches that you are.

Lines 104—105. *And your misery increase with your age*—your miserable condition should become more miserable the more you live.

Lines 105—106. *I say to you, as I was said to, Away*——*i. e.* I banish you from my presence as I was banished from Coriolanus' presence.

Line. 107. *I warrant him*—*i. e.* I am certain that he is so.

Line 108. *The worthy fellow is our general*—it is our general, Coriolanus, and not Menenius, who deserves to be called worthy.

The worthy—a right-worthy fellow.

Lines 108—109. *He's the rock*—he is firm like a rock.

The oak not to be wind-shaken—he is as strong as an oak which cannot be shaken by the wind.

————

Act V, Scene III

I. Summary of the Scene : This scene takes place at the tent of Coriolanus. The latter tells Aufidius that they will besiege Rome on the next day ; further that Aufidius should report to the Volscian lords, how honestly Coriolanus is managing the war. Aufidius replies that Coriolanus bears in mind only the interests of the Volscian lords and that he has refused to listen to his former Roman friends, who had approached him to plead the cause of Rome. Coriolanus remarks that Menenius whom he has, with a broken heart, dis-missed, loved him (Coriolanus) like a father and, indeed, made a god of him. Coriolanus further says that he will not entertain any further embassy from Rome.

Just then Virgilia, Volumnia, young Marcius, Valeria and attendants enter the tent. The ladies are clad in the mourning dress. Volumnia bows to him and young Marcius seems to wear an expression of pleading, which Coriolanus' natural affection bids him to listen to. Coriolanus resolves not to obey the instinct of natural affection.

Virgilia addresses Coriolanus as her lord and husband. He tells her that he sees nothing now in the same light as when he was in Rome. Virgilia tells him that this is because of the sorrow that has brought them before him.

Coriolanus feels that he cannot maintain the attitude of cold indifference. He compares him-self to a dull actor who has forgotten his part. He asks Virgilia to forgive him his cruelty and grant him a kiss.

Suddenly he becomes aware of the presence of his mother, and kneels before her. She blesses him and asks him to stand up, while she kneels before him. Coriolanus does not approve of his mother's kneeling and calls it an un-natural act. Volumnia refers to him as her warrior and draws his attention to Valeria. He praises Valeria for her chastity and greets her. Next, Volumnia presents young Marcius to him. She asks him (young Marcius) to kneel before his father. Then, she tells, Coriolanus that Virgilia, Valeria and young Marcius have come to him as suitors. Coriolanus asks his mother not to plead for Rome. He adds that he should not be thought of as denying her what he has

already sworn not to grant to Rome. He requests her not to ask him to dis-miss his soldiers or to negotiate with Roman artisans, or to modify his anger or revenge.

Volumnia tells him to first listen to their request. Coriolanus invites Aufidius and other Volsces to listen, along with him, to the request of the ladies. Volumnia begins by saying that their dresses and their physical condition disclose what kind of life they have led since Coriolanus' exile. Next she tells him that they are deeply pained to learn that Coriolanus is bent upon destroying his own country—Rome. Further, she argues, that they can neither pray for his victory nor his defeat, because if he wins, they will lose their country, and if he loses, they will lose him. She adds that if he is defeated he will be led as a prisoner through the streets of Rome ; and if he wins, he will be shedding his wife's and children' blood. She concludes by suggesting that if he cannot be persuaded to show mercy to both parties (Romans and Volscians) he will be walking on his mother's womb that brought him into this world.

Virgilia adds that he will also be treading on her womb that brought him forth his son.

Coriolanus feels his resistance to be breaking and rises up, saying that he has listened to them too long.

Volumnia asks him not to go away from them thus. She tells him that their request is not that he should save the Romans and thereby destroy the Volsces. Their petition is that he should reconcile the Romans and the Volscians ; so that the Volsces may say that they have shown mercy and the Romans may feel that they have received it (mercy) and both may acclaim (praise) him for making up this peace.

She, further, tells him that if he wins the war, his name will be cursed by the coming generations of Rome. She therefore asks him to temper his revenge with mercy, as the gods do. She suggests that a noble man should not nurse old grudges. She also asks Virgilia to plead the cause of Rome by speaking to him, as her tears have had no effect on him. She tells young Marcius to plead the cause of Rome, and hopes that perhaps his innocence might move Coriolanus more than her reasons can.

Next, she says that there is no man who should be more obliged to his mother than Coriolanus ; and adds that yet he allows her to chatter like one put to shame.

Further, she accuses him of never showing any courtesy to his mother. She wants him to tell her whether her request is unjust. She observes that if he regards her request just and still refuses to grant it, gods will punish him for his keeping back the duty which he owes to his mother.

Coriolanus, at this point, tries to turn away. Volumnia asks the ladies to fall on their knees at once and to make him ashamed by doing so. She says that they are kneeling for the last time. Finding him still indifferent, she asks her companions to leave him. She adds bitterly that Coriolanus has a Volscian for his mother. His wife too is a Volscian and his son young Marcius resembles him, by accident. She asks him to send them away. She adds that she will be silent till Rome is set on fire and then she will speak a little.

Coriolanus holds Volumnia by the hand in silence and then addresses her as mother. He wonders as to what she has done. He is over-powered by emotions, and exclaims that she has won a happy victory for Rome. He, however, feels that the victory that she has gained over him, is one that will be most dangerous if not fatal to him.

Addressing Aufidius, he says that though he (Coriolanus) cannot make just war, he will make suitable peace. He asks Aufidius if the latter would not have been moved if he (Aufidius) was in his (Coriolanus') position. Aufidius confesses that he was moved by Volumnia's entreaties. Coriolanus asks Aufidius to advise him regarding the conditions on which he would like to make peace. Coriolanus announces that he will not proceed to Rome but will accompany Aufidius back to Antium. He requests Aufidius to support him in this cause. Aufidius says, in an aside, that he will exploit this situation for his personal benefit, and regain his former glory.

Coriolanus invites the ladies to a drink and suggests that they shall bear a formal agreement of peace rather than mere words of assurance to Rome. This will be signed both by the Romans and the Volscians. He compliments them and says that a temple should be built in their honour by the Romans.

II. Main events in the Scene :

1. After the failure of the two embassies, Volumnia leads the third embassy to Coriolanus.
2. The scene takes place at Coriolanus' tent.
3. Volumnia is accompanied by Virgilia, Valeria, and yonug Marcius.
4. Virgilia addresses Coriolanus as her lord and husband.
5. Coriolanus, first, resists her, but ultimately embraces and kisses her.
6. He kneels before Volumnia.
7. She asks him to rise and falls on her knees herself.
8. Coriolanus greets Valeria.
9. Volumnia says that she and her companions have come to him as petitioners, to plead the cause of Rome.
10. Coriolanus tells her that he cannot grant this petition.
11. She tells him to first listen to her request.
12. Coriolanus agrees to do so.
13. Volumnia begins by drawing his attention to their (the ladies') plight. She next says that they have been placed by him in an unfortunate situation, as they can neither pray for his victory nor his defeat. Further, she says that if he invades Rome, he will be treading on his mother's womb.
14. Virgilia supports Volumnia.
15. Coriolanus wishes to turn away from the ladies.
16. Volumnia asks him not to go away.
17. She tells him that her request is not that he should spare Rome. Her petition is that he should reconcile the Romans and the Volscians and thereby earn the gratitude of both.
18. She further says that if he wins the war, his name will be cursed by all the future generations in Rome.
19. She asks Virgilia to speak to her husband, as her tears have failed to move him.

20. She tells young Marcius to plead the cause of Rome.
21. Volumnia accuses Coriolanus of never having shown courtesy to his mother.
22. Coriolanus remains still un-moved.
23. Volumnia asks the ladies to kneel before Coriolanus for the last time.
24. She, finally washes her hands of Coriolanus.
25. Coriolanus is deeply moved by her mother's appeal. He yields to her and says that she has won a victory, though at the cost of her son's life.
26. He tells Aufidius that he will make suitable peace instead of making war on Rome.
27. He invites the ladies to a drink, and says that they will carry back a formal document, containing terms of peace.

III. Dramatic significance of the Scene.

This is the most magnificent scene in the play. It reveals the tremendous power of natural affection. Here, we find a kind of drama within drama ; for th's great scene, like a play, has a beginning, a middle and an ending. It is full of dramatic suspense and has a conflict which rises to a climax. The clash here is between Coriolanus' ego'sm or pride and maternal love.

Coriolanus steels himself against all natural affection and declares :

Fresh embassies and suits
Nor from the state nor private friends, hereafter
Will I lend ear to.

Again,

But, out, affection !
All bond and privilege of nature, break !
Let it be virtuous to be obstinate.

Yet, his strength seems to fail him, the moment he sets his eyes on his wife, and he has to confess :

I melt, and am not
Of stronger earth than others.

He is touched to quick when he sees his mother bowing to him, and exclaims :

My mother bows ;
As if Olympus to a mole-hill should
In supplication nod.

He, however, immediately recovers from this momentary weak-ness and resolves that he will never :

Be such a gosling to obey instinct, but stand
As if a man were author of himself
And knew no other kin.

Then follows a most absorbing conflict, the final outcome of which we await with baited breath.

Volumnia employs the most subtle of weapons to break the will and resistance of her proud and stubborn son. She tries flattery, irony, and sound logic to dissuade him from tearing "his country's bowels out." Finding that he turns a deaf ear to all her arguments, she uses effectively her trump card, namely, her choler. She gives him up as hopeless and washes her hands of him. She concludes her second appeal with angry and bitter words :

Come, let us go :
This fellow had a Volscian to his mother,
His wife is in Corioli and his child—
Like him by chance. Yet give us our dispatch :
I am hush'd until our city be afire,
And then I'll speak a little.

There is a moment of supreme suspense. Our nerves are stretched almost to the breaking point. And then something most un-expected happens. Coriolanus holds her by the hand, silent and, overcome by powerful emotions, exclaims :

O mother, mother !
What have you done ! Behold the heavens do ope
The gods look down, and this un-natural scene
They laugh at

Coriolanus' will and resolution are broken ; his false pride is gone ; and he emerges as a noble and affectionate son, who is capable of a great act of renunciation.

He, as well as, we realize instantaneously what this surrender is going to cost him ; but it raises him infinitely in our eyes and makes him one of the most sympathetic characters in the play.

Commenting on this scene John Palmer observes, "We are braced to witness a dramatic conflict between two characters equally wilful and resolute. Nor are we dis-appointed .... Volumnia argues with him and pleads with him in vain. Finally, she simply *scolds* him into compliance with her wishes —an angry mother reducing her child to obedience by an exhibition of offended impatience, partly sincere and partly assumed......Proud Marcius in submission assures the full stature of a tragic hero. Shakespeare, having anatomised his pride and folly with superb detachment, allows him, in the act that determines his fall, a glory without stint. He is for the instant transfigured by his act of mercy......Yet he knows that by the very act in which he has achieved nobilty, he is doomed. His mother, in prevailing, has been most mortal to him. There can be no place for him hence-forth, either in Antium or Rome."

IV. Shakespeare's debt to North's Plutarch.

This scene is closely modelled on Plutarch. Shakespeare has taken from Plutarch all the important details, such as, the approach of the ladies, Coriolanus' manner of receiving them, Volumnia's two long speeches and Coriolanus' submission. Shakespeare departs from Plutarch in mentioning only one son of Coriolanus, while Plutarch mentions "children." Again, Shakespeare makes the embassy include only Volumnia, Virgilia and Valeria and their attendants, whereas Plutarch makes the embassy include all the chief ladies of Rome. Once again, Shakespeare mentions that Aufidius was present at the camp at the time of the interview, while Plutarch says that the chiefest of the Volsces were present.

The following extracts from North's Plutarch show to what extent Shakespeare is indebted to Plutarch, in this scene. It should be noted that the italicized words in these extracts have been verbally incorporated by Shakespeare, in his version.

(*a*) Then she (Volumnia) spoke in this sort : "If we held our peace and determined not to speak, the *state of our poor bodies* and present sight of our raiment, *would easily bewray to thee what life we have led at home, since thy exile* and abode abroad. *But think now with thyself, how much more unfortunately, than all the women living we are come hither,* considering that the sight which should be most pleasant to all

other to behold, spiteful fortune hath made most fearful to us, making myself to see my son, and my daughter here, her husband besieging the walls of his native country. So as *that which is the only comfort to all other* in their adversity and misery, to pray unto the gods, and to call them for aid, is the only thing which plungeth us into most deep perplexity. For we cannot to-gether pray, both for victory, for our country and for safety of thy life also ; but a world of grievous curses, yea more than any mortal enemy can heap upon us, are forcibly wrapped up in our prayers. For the bitter sop of most hard choice is offered thy wife and children, to forego the one of the two ; either to lose the person of thyself or the nurse of their native country. *For myself I am determined not to tarry, till fortune in my life-time do make an end of this war. For if I cannot persude thee, rather to do good unto both parties,* then to over-throw and destroy the one, perferring love and nature, before the malice and calamity of wars, thou shalt see, my son, *and trust unto it, thou shalt no sooner march forward to assail thy country, but thy foot shall tread upon thy mother's womb, that brought thee first into this world.*

(*b*) *So though the end of war be uncertain, yet this not withstanding is most certain. That if it be thy chance to conquer, this benefit shalt thou reap of thy goodly conquest, to be chronicled the plague and destroyer of thy country.*

(*c*) *"My son, why dost thou not answer me ?......Dost thou take it honourable for a noble man, to remember the wrongs and injuries done him......Besides, thou has not hither-to shewed thy poor mother any courtesy.*

(*d*) And with these words, herself (Volumnia) his wife and children, fell down upon their knees before him. Marcius seeing that, could refrain no longer, but went straight and lifted her up, crying out, "Oh mother, what have you done to me ?" And holding her hand by the right hand, "*Oh mother,*" said he, "*You have won a happy victory for your country, but mortal and un-happy for your son.* For I see myself vanquished by you alone."

Line 2. *Set down*—encamp. *Host*—army.

Line 3. *Plainly*—honestly ; in a straight-forward manner.

Line 4. *I have borne this business*—I have behaved in these negotiations.

Only their ends—i. e. the interest of the Volscian lords only.

Line 5. *Respected*—taken into consideration.

Line 5—6 *Stopp'd your ears against the general suit of Rome—i.e.* you have not listened at all to the universal pleading of the Romans.

Line 8. *Thought them*—thought them-selves.

This last old man—i.e. Menenius.

Line 9. *Crack'd*—broken.

Line 11. *Godded me*—made a god of me ; idolized me.

Their latest refuge—i. e. the last resource of the Romans.

(*Refuge*=resource).

Line 13. *Show'd sourly*—appeared harsh ; behaved very harshly.

Line 15. *And cannot now accept*—and which conditions they cannot accept now from very pride.

To grace him only—only to show favour to him.

Lines 17—20. *Fresh embassies and suits.........will I lend ear to*—I will not listen to any fresh embassies, either from the Roman government or from personal friends, in future.

(*Hereafter*=in future. *Lend ear to*=listen).

Line 20. *Infringe*—break. *Vow*=solemn promise or pledge.

Line 21. *In the same time 'tis made*—at the very moment of making it.

Stage direction : *Habits*—costumes ; dresses.

Line 22. *The honour'd mould—i. e.* my honourable mother.

Line. 23. *This trunk*—this body. *In her hand*—with his hand in hers.

Line 24. *The grand-child—i.e.* Coriolanus' son.

Out—away.

But, out, affection—I will have nothing to do with affection.

Line 25. *All*—every.

Bond and privilege of nature=natural ties and claims.

Line 26. *Let it be virtuous to be obstinate*—let stubbornness be regarded as a virtue, rather than as a vice, henceforward.

Line 27. *What is that curt'sy worth*—of what use is your bowing to me (This is addressed to Virgilia who bows to him).

(*Curtsy*=a woman's deep bow).

Those doves' eyes—those eyes which are as mild as the eyes of doves (Coriolanus, of course, refers to Virgilia's eyes).

Line 28. *Which can make gods forsworn*—which can make gods break their vows.

Line 29. *Of stronger earth than others*—of more stern nature.

Line 30. *Olympus*—(name of a mountain-chain in Thessaly. It was the fabled residence of Greek gods).

Line 31. *Supplication*=entreaty, petition.

Nod—bow

Line 32. *Intercession*—pleading.

Line 33. *Great nature*—great instinct (natural affection).

Great nature cries. "Deny not"—my natural affection bids me to listen to.

Lines 33—34. *Let the Volsces plough Rome and harrow Italy*—let the Volscians destroy Rome and Italy.

Line 35. *Gosling*—young goose *i. e.* a stupid or a silly person.

To obey instinct—*i. e.* to yield to natural affection.

(*To*=as to)

Line 37. *kin*—relative.

Line 38. *These eyes are not the same I wore in Rome*—I no longer look on my relatives with the same eyes as I did in Rome.

Line 39. *That delivers us*—that brings us to you.

Lines 39—40. *The sorrow that delivers us......makes*

you think so—it is because we are changed by sorrow, that you do not look on us as you once did.

Line 41. *I have forgot*—I have forgotten.

I am out=I am at a loss for words.

Line 42. *Even to a full dis-grace*—so that I will completely dis-grace myself.

Best of my flesh—*i. e.* my wife.

Line 43. *Tyranny*—cruelty.

Line 44. *O, a kiss*—O, give me a kiss.

Line 45. *Jealous queen of heaven*—*i.e.* Juno, guardian of marriage.

Note. Juno was often jealous of Jupiter who fell in love with many mortal women.

That kiss—*i. e.* a long and sweet kiss.

Line 48. *Hath virg'n'd it*—has kept itself chaste.

Note. He means that he has not kissed any other woman since.

Prate—chatter ; talk too much.

Line 49. *Of the world*—in the world.

Lines 51—52. *Of thy deep duty more impression show... common sons*—give better evidence of your profound sense of duty than ordinary sons would do.

Line 53. *Whilst*—while. *Flint*—stone.

Lines 54—56. *And unproperly, show duty......child and parent*—and offer reverence to you, though it would be thought proper for you to offer respect to me ; but it appears that I have been mistaken all this time regarding the relations of parents to children.

(*As mistaken*=as if I had been mistaken).

Line 57. *Your knees to me* ? —do you kneel to me ?

Yaur corrected son—the son who was rebuked by you.

Line 58. *Pebbles*—small stones worn smooth by water.

Hungry—barren.

Beach—the part of sea-shore washed by the tide or waves.

Line 59. *Fillip*—strike. *Mutinous*—rebellious.

Line 60. *Strike*—hurt. *Cedars*—(cedar is a coniferous tree). *Fiery*—hot.

Lines 61—62. *Murdering impossibility, to make......... slight work*—making it an easy matter to do what is outside the limits of possibility.

(*Murdering*=putting an end to. *Slight work*—an easy matter).

Line 63. *Holp*—helped. *To frame thee*—to fashion you the soldier that you are.

Line 64. *Publicola*—Publius Valerius, who was Consul thrice and who played a leading part in driving out the Tarquins.

The title of publicola, which means "Cherisher of the people" was conferred on him for his services to the people of Rome.

Line 65. *The moon of Rome*—the Diana of Rome.

Note : Diana is the goddess of moon and chastity.

Chaste—pure. *Icicle*—a spike of ice formed when dripping water freezes.

Line 66. *Curdied*—made like a curd : congealed.

Line 68. *This is a poor epitome of yours*—here is your son, who is yourself in miniature (on a small scale).

(*Epitome*—a brief summary).

Lines 69—70. *Which by the interpretation of full time ......like yourself*—who, enlarged by the commentaries of time, may equal you in magnitude.

(*By the interpretation of full time=i. e.* when time has developed his character).

The god of soldiers—Mars.

Line 71. *Supreme*—highest. *Jove*—Jupiter, the president of Roman gods. *Inform*—shape ; fashion.

Note. "Inform" may mean inspire, also.

Line 73. *Invulnerable*—not susceptible of being wound ed. *Stick*—stand out firmly.

Line 74. *Sea-mark*—beacon ; light house. *Standing*—resisting.

Flaw—a sudden gust of wind.

Line 75. *Eye*—see ; percieve.

Your knee, sirrah—kneel down, sir (Volumnia asks the boy to kneel before his father.)

Lnie 76. *That's my brave boy*—well done, my boy.

Line 78. *Suitors*—petitioners.

Beseech—entreat. *Peace*—*i. e.* silence.

Lines 80—81. *The things I have forsworn to grant may never............denials*—I should not be thought of as denying you what I have already sworn not to grant to Rome.

Bid—ask.

Line 82. *Capitulate*—make terms ; negotiate.

Line 83. *Mechanics*—artisans ; working men.

Line 84. *Wherein I seem un-natural*—of that in my behaviour which seems un-natural towards my relatives and Rome.

Line 85. *Allay*—make quiet or calm ; pacify ; make less violent.

Rages—anger.

Line 86. *Colder reasons*—more calm arguments.

Line 90. *That*—so that. *If you fail in our request*—if you fail to grant our request.

Line 91. *Your hardness*—your stubborn-ness.

Lines 90—91. *The blame may hang upon your hardness*—the blame may rest upon your stubborn-ness, not on us for our want of perseverance.

(*Hang upon*=rest upon).

Line 93. *Nought*—nothing. *Your request* ?—what is your request ?

Lines 94—95. *Our raiment and state of bodies*—

the condition of our robes and the state of our bodies.

Bewray—dis-close ; reveal.

What life—what sort of life.

Line 96. *Exile*—banishment.

Lines 97—98. *How more unfortunate than all living women.........hither*—how much more unlucky than all living women are we in having come to you on such a mission.

Since that—since.

Thy sight—the sight of you.

Line 100. *Constrains them weep*—compels our eyes to shed tears.

And shake with fear and sorrow—*i. e.* and compels our hearts to tremble with fear and grief.

Lines 102—103. *Tearing his country's bowels out*—intent on destroying his native land.

Poor we—poor us.

Line 104. *Capital*—mortal ; fatal.

Thou barr'st us—you prevent or hinder us from ; you debar us from.

Lines 107—109. *Alas, how can we for our country pray..... whereto we are bound*—'how can we pray for our country, which we are bound by our patriotism to do, and at the same time pray for your victory, which we are bound to do by our relation to you.'

Alack—alas.

Or we—either we.

Line 110. *The country*—*i. e.* Rome. *Our dear nurse*—*i. e.* which has brought us up like a loving nurse.

Line 111. *Our comfort*—the source of our comfort.

Line 112. *Evident*—certain. *Calamity*—a great misfortune ; a dis-aster.

Line 113. *Which side*—as to which side.

Lines 111—113. *We must find an evident calamity...... should win*—whichever side should win according to our wish, we will be confronted with a certain disaster.

Line 114. *Recreant*—traitor ; renegade ; deserter.

Line 115. *Manacles*—fetters. *Thorough*—through.

Line 116. *Triumphantly*—victoriously. *Tread*—walk.

Line 117. *Bear the palm*—bear the palm of victory.

Note. 'A branch of palm was presented to a victor as a sign of victory.'

Line 119. *I purpose not to wait on fortune.............. determine*—I do not intend to wait until fortune decides the result of this war.

(*Purpose*=propose ; intend. *Determine*—come to an end).

Line 121. *Both parts—i.e.* the Romans and the Volscians.

Line 122. *Seek the end of one*—carry out the object of Corioli to destroy Rome.

Note. 'End' may also mean destruction and 'one' may mean Rome.

Line 123. *Assault*—attack. *Thy country—i.e.* Rome. *Tread*—walk.

Line 125. *And mine*—and on my womb.

Line 127. *Living to time*—living through future ages. *A'*—he.

Lines 130—131. *Not of a woman's tenderness to be...... woman's face to see*—a person ought not to look on the face of a woman or a child too long, if he wishes not to yield to womanly tender-ness.

Line 133. *If it were so that*—if it were that.

Note. 'So' is unnecessary.

Tend—be inclined.

Line 136. *As poisonous of your honour*—as fatal to your honour ; as a death-blow to your honour.

Suit—petition.

Line 137. *Reconcile*—restore to union and friendship after estrangement.

Line 139. *Each in either side*—everyman on both sides.

Line 140. *Give the all-hail to thee*—acclaim you with the shout 'all hail', (just as it is done while welcoming a king).

Line 142. *The end*—the result.

Lines 144—145. *A name whose repetition will be dogg'd with curses*—a name which will be followed by curses, whenever it is mentioned.

(*Dogg'd*=followed).

Line 146. *Whose chronicle thus writ*—whose history will be written in this way.

(*Chronicle*=history. *Writ*=written).

Line 147. *He wiped it out*—he blotted out his claim to nobility.

148. *The ensuing age*—every following generation.

Abhorr'd—hated ; detested.

Line 150. *Affected*--aimed at. *Fine strains*—fine impulses.

Line 151. *Graces*—mercies.

Line 152. *To tear*—to rend. *Wide cheeks o' the air*—*i.e.* heaven.

Line 153. *Bolt*—thunder-bolt ; lightning.

Line 154. *But*—only. *Rive*—split.

Lines 150—154. *Thou hast affected the fine strains of honour....................that should but rive an oak*—"You have always tried to be god-like in your notions of honour—to be terrible but yet to temper the terror with mercy—why not now."

Note. Volumnia means that gods exhibit their power in the thunder which seems to rend the sky, and yet they are merciful, because their lightning only splits an oak. Coriolanus has always aimed at imitating the gods. He should therefore temper his anger with mercy.

Line 156. *Still*—always.

Line 157. *He cares not for your weeping*—*i.e.* your tears have failed to m ve him.

Line 160. *More bound to's mother*—more indebted to his mother.

Prate—chatter ; talk idly.

Line 161. *Like one i' the stocks*—like a petty offender whose complaints as he sits in the stocks are dis-regarded by the passers-by.

(*Stocks*=a framework for confining petty offenders).

Line 163. *Fond of no second brood*—desiring no other children.

Line 164. *Has cluck'd thee to the wars*—sent you forth with proud affection, to the war.

And safely home—and has welcomed you on your return home.

Line 165. *Loaden*—loaded ; laden.

Lines 163—165. *When she, poor hen, fond of no second brood..............loaden with honour*—when she who desired no

other children, sent you forth to the war, with proud affection and welcomed you home, when you returned from the wars, laden with honours.

(*Cluck*=to call as a hen does when the chickens are wandering away from her).

Line 166. *Spurn*—reject with dis-dain. *If it be not so*—if it be not unjust.

Plague—harass.

Line 168. *Thou restrain'st*—you with-hold ; you keep back.

Line 169. *To a mother's part belongs*—is due to one in the relationship of mother.

Line 170. *Down*--*i.e.* kneel. *Let us shame him with our knees*—let us make him ashamed by kneeling to him.

Lines 171—172. *To his surname Coriolanus 'longs more pride.........prayers*—he is so proud of the fury with which he captured Corioli and thus won his title, that he refuses to take pity on our misery.

(*'longs*=belongs).

An end—*i.e.* this is the end of our petition.

Line 173. *We will home*—we will return home.

Line 174. *Behold's*—behold us.

Line 176. *For fellowship*—for company (*i.e.* because we kneel).

Line 177. *Reason*—argue ; plead for.

Line 179. *This fellow*—*i.e.* Coriolanus.

To his mother--for his mother.

Line 181. *Like him by chance*--his son resembles him only by accident (*i.e.* Coriolanus' son is not actually his son).

Dispatch--permission to return.

Line 2. *I am hush'd*--I will be silent.

Afire—on fire.

Line 184. *Ope*—open.

Line 187. *Victory to Rome*--victory for Rome.

Line 190. *Mortal*--mortally.

Lines 189--190. *Most dangerously you have with him*

prevail'd.............mortal to him—the victory that you have won over your son is one that will prove most dangerous, if not mortal, to him.

But let it come—but let this fatal blow strike him.

Line 191. *True wars*--wars in which I can be faithful to the wishes of the Volscians.

Line 192. *I'll frame*--I will make. *Convenient*--suitable ; favourable.

Line 193. *In my stead*--in my place.

Line 194. *Less*--less moved.

I was moved withal--I too was touched by her pleading.

Line 196. *To sweat compassion*--to shed tears of pity. (*Compassion*=pity).

Line 197. *What peace you'll make*--what terms of peace you wish to demand.

Line 198. *I'll not to Rome*--I will not proceed to Rome.

Line 200. *Stand to me*--support me.

Lines 201--203. *I am glad thou hast set thy mercy and thy honour........... ....myself a former fortune*--I am happy that you have allowed your sense of mercy to come into conflict with your sense of honour. I will exploit this to regain my former high position.

Ay, by and by--yes very shortly.

Note. This is said in answer to some request by the ladies, probably that they might now return to Rome, with the happy news.

Line 205. *Better witness*--stronger proof.

Line 206. *Counter-seal'd*--sealed by the Romans and the Volscians.

Line 208. *A temple built you*--a temple built in honour of you.

Note. According to Plutarch a temple was erected in honour of the ladies.

Line 209. *Confederate*--allies.

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Act V, Scene IV

1. Summary of the Scene :

The scene is a public place in Rome. Menenius tells Sicinius that the ladies of Rome, especially Volumnia, will not succeed in prevailing on Coriolanus. Sicinius wonders at the change that has come over Coriolanus in such a short time. Menenius remarks that Coriolanus does not care for his mother or his best friends now, and that he sits in a chair of state, like a statue of Alexander the Great.

A messenger appears on the scene and asks Sicinius to seek shelter in his home, as the plebeians have got hold of Brutus and are dragging him up and down. The plebeians declare solemnly that if the ladies do not bring a good news, they will kill Brutus with lingering torture.

Just then another messenger enters and brings the news that the ladies have succeeded in persuading Coriolanus ; the Volscians have retired, and Marcius has left for Antium. Sicinius wishes to know if this news is correct. The messenger assures him that it is. The latter asks Sicinius to listen to the sounds of trumpets and drums and shouts of the people. He adds that all the Romans are rejoicing because of this happy news. Menenius welcomes this piece of information and says that he will go to meet the ladies. He pays a tribute to Volumnia, saying that she is more worthy than all the consuls, senators and particians, taken together. He feels thrilled to hear how the people are making merry. Sicinius thanks and blesses the messenger. Feeling that the ladies are about to enter Rome, Sicinius and others go to meet them.

III. Main events in the Scene :

1. Menenius tells Sicinius that the ladies of Rome will fail in their mission.
2. A messenger informs Sicinius that the latter should beware of the wrath (anger) of the people, who have caught hold of Brutus.
3. A second messenger brings the news that the ladies have succeeded in prevailing on Coriolanus.
4. Menenius and Sicinius rejoice in the good news.
5. They go to the gate of the city in order to welcome the ladies.

III. Dramatic significance of the Scene :

This scene fills up the gap between the ladies' leaving Coriolanus' camp and their arriving at Rome. Menenius seems to have recovered his lost spirits. He engages himself in the old game of teasing the tribunes. He enjoys having his fun at the expense of Sicinius. Thus he tells the latter : there is no more mercy in him (Coriolanus) than there is milk in a male tiger ; that shall our poor city find : and all this is long of you. Again, when Sicinius wishes that the gods should be good unto them, Menenius tells him curtly, "No, in such a case the gods will not be good unto us. When we banished him, we respected not them, and, he returning to break our necks, they respect not us".

This scene affords us a glimpse of Menenius, who seems to be in his element. He pays a glowing tribute to Volumnia, when he says :

This Volumnia
Is worth of consuls, senators, patricians,
A city full : of tribunes, such as you,
A sea and land full.

This scene, which is Shakespeare's invention, affords us a breathing space between Coriolanus' submission to Volumnia and his ultimate doom at Antium.

IV. Shakespeare's debt to North's Plutarch :

Shakespeare has made use of Plutarch's hint how the Romans rojoiced at the withdrawal of the Volscian army.

Line 1. *Coign*—corner.

Yond—distant but within view.

Line 3. *Why, what of that ?*—well, what has that to do with the matter ?

Line 6. *Prevail with him—i. e.* persuade Coriolanus.

Lines 8—9. *Our throats are sentenced and stay upon execution—i. e.* we are doomed to die and are only waiting for the decision to be carried out.

(*Stay upon*=wait for).

Line 10. *Condition*—temper ; nature.

Line 11. *Differency*—difference. *Grub*—larva of butterfly.

Line 12. *Was a grub*—was once a grub.

Line 13. *Dragon*—(Compare Coriolanus' remark in Act IV, Scene I, where he says, "I go alone, like to a lonely dragon.")

Line 14. *A creeping thing*—*i. e.* a grub.

Line 17. *Tartness*—sourness.

Line 19. *Engine*—*i. e.* engine of war, such as a battering-ram.

Line 20. *Corslet*—piece of body armour.

Line 21. *Knell*—death-bell. *Talks like a knell*—his words are sentence of death.

His hum is a battery—when he utters an exclamation it is like the discharge of a unit of artillery.

Line 22. *His state*—his chair of state. *As a thing made for Alexander*—as a thing made to represent Alexander ; like a statue of Alexander.

(*Made for*=made in imitation of).

Alexander—Alexander the Great of Macedon (356—323 B. C). He is regarded as a type of a world-conqueror.

Line 23. *Is finished with his bidding*—is done as soon as he has ordered it.

Lines 24—25. *He wants nothing of a god but eternity and a heaven to throne in*—he possesses all the qualities of a god except everlasting life and a heaven in which to be enthroned ; he would be a god if he were eternal and had a heaven for his throne.

Line 26. *Yes, mercy*—yes, he lacks mercy.

Line 27. *I paint him in the character*—I paint him as he actually is.

In the character=in his true character).

Lines 30—31. *All this is long of you*—all this is because of you.

(*Long of*=along of ; owing to).

Lines 34—35. *We respected not them*—we did not show any reverence to the gods.

He returning—now that he is returning.

Line 38. *Your fellow-tribune*—*i. e.* Brutus.

Line 39. *Hale*—drag.

Line 41. *Death by inches*—death by slow torture.

Line 43. *Are dis-lodged*—have broken up their camp.

Line 45. *Not the expulsion of Tarquins*—not even the day on which the Tarqunis were expelled from Rome.

Line 48. *Where have you lurk'd*—where have you been hiding ?

That you make doubt of it—that you doubt the truth of this information.

Line 49. *The blown tide*—the swollen tide.

Line 50. *Re-comforted*—the people who have had fresh comfort given them. *Stage Direction* : *Hautboys*—a wood-wind instrument with a penetrating tone.

Line 51. *Sackbuts*—trombones (a kind of wind-instrument).

Psalteries—a kind of stringed instrument.

Fifes—(fife is a shrill musical instrument like a flute).

Line 52. *Tabors*—small drums.

Cymbals—a pair of metal concave plates that ring when struck to-gether.

Line 53. *Make the sun dance*—make the sun rejoice.

Note. The sun was supposed to dance on Easter day in order to rejoice in the Resurrection (Christ's rising from the grave).

Line 58—59. *This morning for ten thousand of your throats......a doit*—only this morning I would not have given even half a farthing for the lives of ten thousand of you.

(*Doit*=half a farthing).

They joy—they rejoice.

Line 60. *Tidings*—news.

Line 64. *At point to enter*—on the point of entering.

Line 65. *And help the joy*—and join in the rejoicing.

————

Act V, Scene V

1. Summary of the Scene :

The scene is a street near the gate in Rome. The ladies enter accompanied by the Senators, Patricians and the People. The first senator welcome them. He asks the people to strew

flowers before them, and to shout for the recall of Coriolanus. He calls upon all to welcome the ladies. All the people accord a warm reception to them (*i.e* the ladies).

II. Main events in the Scene :

1. The ladies enter the city. They are accompanied by the Senators, Patricians and the people.
2. The first senator asks the people to welcome the ladies, and shout for the recall of Coriolanus.

3. Dramatic Significance of the Scene :

This is one of the shortest scenes in the play. Its dramatic purpose is to give us a breathing space before we are led to witness the final doom of Coriolanus.

The subject of this scene is the welcome which the Romans accorded to the ladies, on their return to Rome. Incidentally this scene reveals how relieved the Romans feel, on learning that the ladies have succeeded in prevailing on Coriolanus.

IV. Shakespeare's debt to North's Plutarch :

This scene has for its basis one sentence that occurs in North's Plutarch, namely : And this common joy was yet more manifestly shewed by the honourable courtesies the whole senate and people did bestow on their ladies.

Line 1. *Patroness*—protectress.

Our patroness—*i. e.* Volumnia. *The life of Rome*—the saviour of Rome ; one to whom Rome owes its life.

Line 3. *Triumphant fires*—bon-fires (fires lighted in the open).

Strew—over-spread by scattering ; scatter.

Line 4. *Un-shout the noise that banish'd Marcius*—'cancel the shouts with which you banished Marcius by still louder shouts in his honour'.

Line 5. *Repeal him*—recall Coriolanus.

Repeal him with the welcome of his mother—recall Coriolanus at the same time as you welcome his mother.

Line 6. *Ladies*—*i. e.* Volumnia, Virgilia and Valeria.

———

Act V ; Scene VI.

Summary of the Scene :

This scene takes place in Antium. Aufidius asks his attendants to inform the Volscian lords that he has returned from the wars and that they (*i. e.* the lords) should assemble at the market-place. He suggests that he would accuse Coriolanus of treachery, there.

Three or four conspirators belonging to Aufidius's party, enter. Aufidius confides in them that he intends to impeach Coriolanus, because he has good reasons for doing so. He accuses Coriolanus of his having seduced the former's friends. Aufidius observes, further, that though he shared half of his command with Coriolanus, the latter did not show the proper courtesy to him. He began to treat Aufidius like a follower and not a partner.

The first conspirator supports Aufidius and charges Coriolanus with depriving them of spoils, when he had almost captured Rome. Aufidius says that this is the point on which he will attack Coriolanus with his utmost ability. Aufidius announces that Coriolanus will die for this crime of his, and the former will renew his greatness in Coriolanus' down-fall.

Just then they hear the sounds of drums and trumpets and shouts of people. The three conspirators dis-approve of the welcome that the people are according to Coriolanus, and suggest to Aufidius that he should kill Coriolanus, when a favourable opportunity offers itself, and before he (Coriolanus) explains his conduct.

The lords of the city enter now. They welcome Aufidius. One of them says that they cannot pardon Coriolanus for his refusal to capture Rome.

Coriolanus appears on the scene. He greets the lords and professes his loyaly to them. He informs them that, in obedience to their command, he successfully conquered Roman territories, till he reached the gates of Rome ; and that the spoils which he has brought home exceed the cost of the expedition by at least one third. He says, further, that the peace he has made is a source of honour to them and that of shame to the Romans. He wishes to hand over to them the document, containing the terms of peace.

Aufidius asks the lords not to read it and calls Coriolanus a traitor, who has abused their powers. Coriolanus is shocked at being described as a traitor. Aufidius repeats the charge. He (Aufidius) refuses to address Marcius as Coriolanus. Further he informs the lords that Marcius has treacherously betrayed the Volsces, and refused to capture Rome, for the sake of a few tears, shed by his wife and his mother. He has thus broken his oath and resolution. Coriolanus protests against these accusations. Aufidius insults him by calling him a whining boy.

Coriolanus flies into a rage and asks the lords to contradict Aufidius's lies and false accusations. The former suggests that even now Aufidius carries on his person the marks of the wounds inflicted by Coriolanus.

The first lord asks both Coriolanus and Aufidius to keep quiet. Coriolanus, however, cannot help giving vent to his anger. He insinuates (suggests) that Aufidius is a liar, and has no justification in calling him a boy. He reminds Aufidius that if the Volscians have written their history correctly, it is recorded there, that Coriolanus, single-handed, caused the hearts of Volscians to flutter with fear, just as an eagle does, when he enters a little house for doves.

Aufidius instigates the Volscian lords against Coriolanus by telling them that the latter, who is an un-holy braggart, (a boastful man) is insulting them, in their very presence. All the conspirators shout that Coriolanus deserves death for this offence of his. The citizens suggest that he should be torn to pieces. They recall how he killed their relatives in the Volscian war.

The second lord intervenes and asks the citizens to maintain order. He praises Coriolanus, calling the latter a noble and famous soldier. He observes that Coriolanus' last offence will have a judicial hearing.

Coriolanus, still burning with rage, remarks that he wishes, he had the right to use his sword against Aufidius. The latter calls him an insolent villain. Aufidius and the conspirators pounce upon Coriolanus and kill him.

The second lord dis-approves of Coriolanus' murder. The third lord asks Aufidius and others to sheathe their swords.

Aufidius, while explaining his action, tells the lords that Coriolanus, if allowed to remain alive, would have proved a source of danger to them. He asks them to summon him before their senate, where he will either prove his loyalty or submit to any sentence, that they may pass upon him.

The first lord orders that Coriolanus' body should be removed from there, and that his death should be lamented. The second lord observes that Coriolanus' own violence, to a great extent, excuses the deed of Aufidius.

Aufidius after murdering Coriolanus feels repentant, and says that he is angry no more. He calls upon three chief soldiers to take up Coriolanus' body. He agrees to be the fourth bearer himself. He orders that the drum should sound mournfully and the soldiers should follow the corpse, carrying their pikes (lances) reversed. He adds that though Coriolanus deprived many women, in Antium, of their husbands and children, yet he shall have a noble memorial.

II. Main events in the Scene

1. This scene takes place at Antium.
2. Aufidius confides in three or four conspirators, how he intends to bring about the down-fall and death of Coriolanus.
3. Aufidius meets the Volscian lords at the market-place.
4. Coriolanus arrives at the market-place.
5. He tells the lords that he is still loyal to them, and that he has signed an honourable peace with the Romans.
6. Aufidius calls him a traitor and tells the lords that the latter has betrayed them.
7. Coriolanus objects to the charge of treachery.
8. Aufidius repeats the accusation and says that Coriolanus has given up Rome for the sake of a few tears, shed by his wife and his mother and that he is a whining boy.

9. Coriolanus flies into a rage at the mention of the word 'boy.'
10. He reminds Aufidius that the former had worked havoc, single-handed, in Corioli.
11. Aufidius instigates the lords against Coriolanus.
12. The lords ask both Coriolanus and Aufidius to keep quiet.
13. Coriolanus wishes that he could use his sword against Aufidius.
14. Aufidius calls him an insolent villain.
15. Aufidius and the conspirators pounce upon Coriolanus and kill him.
16. Aufidius feels repentant over Coriolanus' dead body and says that the latter would have a noble memorial.

III. Dramatic Significance of the Scene :

The subject of this scene is the final doom of the tragic hero, and it is brought about by the two fatal flaws in his character, namely his pride and his choler.

This scene "reproduces in a different key the scene in which Coriolanus was formerly goaded by Sicinius into exile." The resemblance is quite striking. Aufidius uses the same word (*i. e.* traitor) to precipitate in Coriolanus the loss of self-control. The proud and hot-tempered Coriolanus flies into a rage and thereby falls into the trap laid by Aufidius. While giving vent to his uncontrollable choler, he grows more and more rash, so much so that he forgets that he is outraging the feelings of his masters, the Volscian lords, by reminding Aufidius :

> *If you have writ your annals true, 'tis' there,*
> *That like an eagle in a dove-cote, I*
> *Flutter'd your Volscians in Corioli :*
> *Alone I did it. Boy* !

This scene once again emphasizes Coriolanus' in-born inability to exercise self-control and restraint and his tragic failure to adjust himself to circumstances. Like most of Shakespeare's tragic heroes, Coriolanus is required to make

a choice, after being placed in the midst of a set of circumstances, but he is so constituted, that he cannot make it. In Coriolanus' case his failure and death are the direct result of his stubbornness, pride and choler. He cannot help being what he is, though the circumstances require him to be just the opposite of his normal self. Thus his final doom, which is predicted by himself (Act V, Scene III, Lines 187—189) appears to us inevitable. He perishes as a victim of his own passion. According to Maccallum, "He (Coriolanus) never belies his own great though mixed nature, and it is fitting that his death, needless but heroic, should have its cause in his nature and be such as his nature would select."

Coriolanus retains our sympathy in the hour of his doom. He cannot endure an insult to his soldiership and his man-hood, and his courage never deserts him.

He draws his sword, shouting angrily :

O that I had him,
With six Aufidiuses, or more, his tribe,
To use my lawful sword.

His death evokes pity as well as terror. He is overtaken by nemesis and has to atone for his pride, insolence and choler ; all the same, we are struck with sorrow, when he is no more, and feel like accusing Aufidius of "having done a deed whereat valour will weep."

IV. Shakespeare's debt to North's Plutarch :

Shakespeare is indebted to Plutarch for the cut-lines of this scene. He has taken from Plutarch the details concerning the hatching of a conspiracy against Coriolanus, the manner and circumstances of Coriolanus' final doom ; and the decision of the Volscians to raise a monument to Coriolanus' memory.

Stage direction : *Antium*—a city situated to the south of Corioli.

Line 2. *Having read it*—when they have read it.

Line 3. *Repair*—betake themselves.

Line 4. *Even in theirs*—in their very ears.

Line 5. *Will vouch the truth of it*—will supply full proof of the truth of its contents.

Him I accuse—he whom I accuse.

Line 6. *Ports*—gates. *By this*—by this time.

Line 8. *To purge himself*—to clear himself of the charge of treason.

(*Purge*=clear).

Dispatch—go.

Stage direction. Faction—a group or clique in a party, seeking to promote partisan interests.

Line 10. *Our general*—*i. e.* Aufidius.

Lines 11—12. *As with a man by his own alms empoison'd ....charity slain*—'as with a man who has ruined himself by the generosity with which he gives alms.'

Note. Aufidius means that the favours, which he bestowed on Coriolanus, have brought about his (Aufidius's) ruin.

Line 13. *Intent*—purpose.

If you do hold the same intent—if you still stick to that purpose.

Lines 13—14. *Wherein you wish'd us parties*—in which you desired us to share.

(*Parties*=sharers).

Deliver—set free.

Line 15. *Of*—from.

I cannot tell—I do not know.

Line 16. *As we do find the people*—*i. e.* the temper in which we find the people.

Line 18. *'Twixt*—between. *Difference*—dis-pute.

Lines 18—19. *But the fall of either makes the survivor heir of all*—but the downfall of either of you, places everything into the hands of the one who survives.

Line 20. *My pretext*—my pretended reason.

Lines 20—21. *Admits a good construction*—can yield a plausible explanation.

Pawn'd—pledged.

Line 22. *His truth*—his loyalty.

So heighten'd—so highly esteemed.

Line 23. *He watered his new plants*—*i. e.* he fostered his new powers.

With dews of flattery—*i. e.* by employing the weapon of flattery.

Line 24. *Seducing so many friends*—in this way drawing many of my friends away.

Line 25. *He bow'd his nature*—he made himself humble.

Line 26. *Un-swayable*—un-bending.

Free—submitting to no control.

Stoutness—obstinacy.

Line 27. *By lack of stooping*—*i. e.* because he did not humble himself before the people.

Line 29. *That I would have spoke of*—I intended to refer to that.

Line 30. *Hearth*—home.

Line 32. *Gave him way*—*i. e.* yielded to him.

Line 34. *Files*—ranks , troops. *His project to accomplish*—for the accomplishment of his purpose.

Line 35. *Men*—soldiers. *Designments*—designs.

Line 36. *In mine own person*—by my personal service.

Holp—helped.

Line 37. *Which he did end all his*—which he gathered to himself.

(*End*=store up).

Line 38. *To do*—in doing.

Line 40. *He waged me with his countenance*—he paid me with smiles and patronising looks.

(*Waged*=paid wages).

Line 41. *Mercenary*—hireling ; paid soldier.

Line 42. *In the last*—at last.

Line 43. *When he had carried Rome*—when he had almost captured Rome.

And that—and when that.

Line 44. *Spoil*—plunder.

There was it—this is the point.

Line 45. *For which my sinews shall be stretch'd upon him*—'on which I will attack him with my utmost abilities' (Johnson).

Line 46. *At a*—for the value of.

Rheum—tears.

Lines 47—48. *He sold the blood and labour of our great action*—'he bartered away all the lives we had lost and all the labours we had undergone in our great enterprise'.

Line 49. *I'll renew me in his fall*—I will regain my former position in his downfall.

Line 50. *Post*—messenger.

Line 52. *Patient*—long suffering.

Lines 53—54. *Their base throats tear with giving him glory*—are ignoble enough to split their throats with shouts to honour him.

At your vantage—at an advantageous moment, when a chance offers itself.

Line 55. *Move*—impress.

Line 57. *Second*—assist. *Lies along*—lies dead.

(*Along*=stretched out).

Lines 58—59. *After your way his tale pronounced shall bury.........his body*—the telling of his story according to your interpretation shall bury the reasons, he may plead, along with his dead body.

(*After your way his tale pronounced*=your version of his story).

Line 62. *With heed*—*i. e.* carefully.

Perused—read.

Line 63. *To hear't*—to learn what you have written.

Line 64. *What faults he made*—the faults that Coriolanus committed.

The last—*i. e.* the last fault, namely, not capturing Rome.

Line 65. *Might have found easy fines*—might have escaped with only little punishment.

(*Easy fines*=light penalties).

Lines 65—66. *But there to end where he was to begin*—but nothing can excuse the fact of his ending our enterprise at the point where it should have commenced, that is, by the conquest of Rome.

Lines 66—67. *And give away the benefit of our levies*—and throw away the advantage acquired by the raising of our army.

Lines 67—68. *Answering us with our own charge*—rewarding us with our expenses *i. e.* giving us for our only reward the burden of expenditure.

Lines 68—69. *When there was a yielding*—*i.e.* when Rome was likely to surrender itself to the Volscians.

Line 71. *I am return'd your soldier*—I am still at your command.

Line 72. *Infected*—under the influence of.

Line 73. *When I parted hence*—when I departed from here.

Subsisting—remaining.

Line 74. *You are to know*—I have to inform you.

Line 75. *That prosperously I have attempted*—my enterprises have been crowned with success.

Line 76. *With bloody passage*—while killing your enemies I have forced my way.

Lines 77—79. *Our spoils we have brought home.........the charges of the action*—Our spoils exceed the cost of war by a full third.

(*Counterpoise*=equal. *Action*=expedition).

Line 80. *Antiates*—*i. e.* people of Antium.

Line 82. *Subscribed*—signed.

Lines 83—84. *What we have compounded on*—the terms on which we made peace.

(*Compounded on*=agreed on).

Line 85. *In the high'st degree*—in an extreme manner.

Note. Some editors omit the comma after traitor in Line No. 85, and suggest that the phrase "in the high'st degree" qualifies the word "traitor", and not the word "abused".

Line 86. *Abused*—wrongly used.

Traitor—(Coriolanus flies into a rage at being called traitor, just as he did in Act III, Scene III).

Lines 88—90. *Dost thou think I'll grace thee with that robbery......in Corioli*—do you expect that I will call you by the title Coriolanus that you stole in Corioli *i. e.* a title to which you have no right.

Note—It is to be remembered that the scene is laid in Antium, and not in Corioli.

Line 91. *Perfidiously*—treacherously.

Line 93. *Certain drops of salt*—*i. e.* a few tears.

Line 94. *I say your city*—I say your city becau e if he were not treacherous, it would have been yours.

Line 96. *Twist*—a few threads twisted together.

Lines 96—97. *Never admitting counsel o' the war*—never allowing anybody to give advice as to the management of war.

At his nurse's tears—as soon as his mother began to cry.

Note. "Nurse" is, here, a contemptuous substitute for the word "mother".

Line 98. *He whined and roar'd away your victory*—he cried and wept loudly and thereby deprived you of victory that you had won.

Line 99. *That*—so that. *Pages*—boy attendants. *Men of heart*—brave men.

Line 100. *At other*—at the other.

Mars—Roman god of war.

Hear'st thou, Mars—Coriolanus appeals to the god of war to contradict the charge of cowardice that is being levelled against him.

Line 101. *The god*—*i. e.* the god of war (Mars).

Thou boy of tears—you whimpering boy.

Line 102. *No more*—*i. e.* you are no more than a whimpering boy.

Line 103. *Measureless*—great.

Lines 103—104. *Thou hast made my heart too great for what contains it*—you have made me so angry that my heart threatens to burst my breast.

(*What contains it*=my body ; my breast).

Line 106. *Scold*—rebuke.

Line 107. *Must give this cur lie*—must prove this dog to

be a liar.

Notion—under-standing

Line 108—109. *Who wears my stripes impress'd upon him, that.........to his grave*—who even now bears the marks of my blows on his person, and who must carry to his grave the disgrace of being beaten by me.

Shall join—(the subject of this is "his own notion").

Lines 110. *To thrust the lie unto him*—to force the lie down his throat.

(*Unto*=into).

Line 113. *Stain all your edges on me*—thrust all your swords into my body.

(*Edges*=swords).

Line 114. *Have writ*—have written *Annals*—history *'Tis there*—it is recorded there.

Line 115. *Dove-cote*—a little house for doves.

Line 116. *Flutter'd*—caused to flutter.

(*Flutter*=move or beat irregulary, as the heart).

Lines 115—116. *That, like an eagle in dove-cote, I... in Corioli*—that I caused the hearts of your Volscians to flutter with fear, just as an eagle does those of dove in their little house.

Line 118. *Will be put in mind of*—will be reminded of.

Blind fortune—undeserved good fortune ; success which came by chance, not merit.

Line 119. *Your shame*—your disgrace. *Unholy*—cursed. *Braggart*—boaster.

Line 121. *Presently*—at once.

Line 124. *Outrage*—cruel violence.

Line 125. *The man*—i.e. Coriolanus.

Folds in—embraces ; enfolds ; over-spreads.

Line 126. *This orb o' the earth*—the entire world.

His last offence—i.e. his refusing to capture Rome

Line 127. *Judicious*—judicial i. e. before a proper constitutional court.

Stand—stop.

Line 128. *Trouble not*=do not disturb.

Line 129. *His tribe*—the whole of his race.

Line 130. *To use my lawful sword*—where it would be

lawful to use my sword.

Insolent—contemptuously rude ; dis-respectfully rude, dis-respectful or insulting.

Line 132. *Hold*—stop.

Line 134. *Valour*—i.e. valiant (brave) men.

Line 135. *Put up your sword*—sheathe your sword.

Line 136. *An in this*—which in this.

Rage—wrath ; anger.

Line 138. *Which this man's life did owe you*—which you were certain to encounter if Coriolanus continued to live.

Line 139. *Cut off*—killed. *Please it*—if it pleases.

Lines 140—141. *I'll deliver myself*—I will prove myself.

Endure—i. e. submit to.

Line 142. *Censure*—sentence of punishment.

Line. 144. *Corse*—corpse ; dead body.

Lines 144—145. *That ever herald did follow to his urn*—(a reference to the presence of the herald at a royal or noble funeral where he proclaimed the titles of the dead person).

Urn=grave

Lines 145—146. *His own impatience takes from Aufidius......of blame*—Coriolanus' own wrath, to a great extent, excuses Aufidius's deed.

Line 147. *Rage*—wrath ; anger.

Line 149. *I'll be one*—I will be one of the four bearers.

Line 150. *That it speak*—so that it sounds.

Line 151. *Trail your steel pikes*—hold your lances wrong way up and draw them along the ground.

Note. At a military funeral the lance-men marched in the procession with pikes trailed and reversed.

Line 152. *Hath widow'd and unchilded many a one*—has deprived many wives of their husbands and many parents of their children.

(*Un-childed*=made childless).

Line 153. Which—who. *Bewail*—mourn ; lament.

Line 154. *Memory—memorial.*

Appendix I
Glossary

A

Abated—brought low ; beaten down.
Absolute—un-restrained
Abuse—deceive
Admire—marvel
Advantage—opportunity
Anon—immediately
Approbation—approval
Apron men—working men
Article—conditions in an agreement
Articulate—draw up an agreement
Aediles—assistants of Tribunes.
Atone—be at one
Augurer—sooth-sayers.
Avoid—shun

B

Bale—misfortune
Batten—fatten
Bewray—disclose
Billeted—quartered
Blanks—white papers, not written on
Baited—teased
Bolted—sifted
Brawn—muscles of the arm
Brizled—bearded
Brats—children
Brook—endure
Bulks—projecting parts of a building
Bussing—kissing
Buttock—end

C

Canopy—covering
Capital—fatal
Carbonado—broiled meat
Cautelous—crafty ; cunning
Centuries—companies of a hundred
Cicatrice—scar
Charter—special privilege
Choler—anger
Circumvention—means of prevention
Cockle—a weed among corn
Conduits—canals
Cog —cheat
Coign—corner stone
Conned—learnt by heart
Conspectuities—eyes.
Constant—firm
Commonalty—common people
Companion—fellow
Confirm'd—resolute
Coy'd—remained quiet
Conies—rabbits.
Contemn—despise
Contriv'd—plotted
Convented—summoned
Crack—imp
Cranks—passages
Cry—a pack of hounds
Curdied—congealed

D

Dam—mother
Daws—jack-daws

Dastard—coward
Debile—feeble
Deliver—set free
Desperation—despair
Despite—contempt
Dis-propertied—dis-possessed
Doit—a small coin worth half a farthing.
Dotant—dotard ; a foolish person

E

Embirquements—embargos
Empuricutic—quackery
Emulation—jealous rivalry
Epitome—a summary
Envied—shown hate
Even—evenly ; well-balanced

F

Factionary—zealous partisan
Favour—face
Fatigate—fatigued
Fellowship—recognition
Files—ranks
Flamens—priests
Flaw—blast
Feat—deed
Fell—cruel
Flout—to mock
Fob—to cheat
Foiled—defeated
Fond—foolish.
Fob off—put off
Folds in—encompasses
Front—confront

G

Garland—crown
Gangrened—mortified
Giber—mocker ; idle talker
Giddy—fickle
Gird—jibe at ; taunt
Groat—a coin worth four-pence
Good den—good evening
Got—begotten
Gratify—express gratitude for
Grief shot—struck by grief
Gulf—whirpool

H

Hale—drag
Holp—helped
Hoop'd—hooted
Havoc—destruction
Hie—hasten
Hint—subject ; theme.
Humorous—whimsical

I

Indifferently—impartially
Inkling—a hint
Interim—interval

J

Jump—risk
Judicious—judicial
Jove—Jupiter, the president of Roman gods
Juno—queen of heaven, wife of Jupiter

K

Kam—crooked

L

Limitation—allotted period
Leasing—false-hood
Lockram—a kind of cheap linen
Lot—portion
Long—along ; because of
Lictors—attendants of the higher magistrates

M

Malkin—slut ; a kitchen wench
Members—limbs

Minded—reminded
Monster'd—exaggerated
Murrain—cattle disease
Muniments—defences
Mould—body.
Memory—memorial
Microcosm—a little world
Maims—injuries.
Malign—treat with malice
Mammock—to tear to pieces
Meed—reward.
Mellow—fully ripe
Moe—more
Mortal—fatal

N

Navel—centre
Nerves—sinews
Notion—under-standing
Noisome—annoying
Notched—cut

O

Ordinance—rank
Owe—own
Osprey—the sea eagle

P

Palter—shift.
Parcels—small parts.
Particulars—individuals
Physical—medicinal
Potch—thrust
Prank—adorn
Passing—exceedingly
Ports—gates
Power—army
Practice—treachery
Presently—immediately
Prating—talking
Provand—dry food for beasts
Puny—inferior.

Q

Quarry—a heap of slaughtered game
Quak'd—made to tremble
Quired—sounded in chorus with

R

Rack'd—made violent efforts
Ranges—stands in order
Rapture—fit
Rascal—good for nothing
Reason—plead for
Recreant—traitor
Reechy—dirty
Remission—forgive-ness
Requitted—paid back
Rheum—moisture ; tears.
Roted—learnt by heart
Ruth—pity

S

Salve—save
Scaling—measuring
Scotch—to wound
Seal—conclude
Seconds—supports
Sensible—subject to feeling ; sensitive
Shent—rebuked ; blamed
Shreds—fragments
Stale—to render stale
Sithence—since
Sowl—pull by the ears
Spices—flavours
Spleen—rage ; anger
Stamp—pattern
Strain—race ; breed
Stay upon—wait upon
Still—always ; continuously
Synod—assembly.
Surfeit—eat to excess

T

Tag—rabble
Target—shield
Tetter—disease ; cover with scabs
Thwack—beat
Traitor—one who betrays
Trencher—wooden plate
Trophy—a token of victory

U

Undercrest—support honourably
Usury—interest
Undo—ruin
Un-separable—inseparable
Usher—door-keeper

V

Vaward—vanguard
Vail—lower
Varlet—servant
Verdict—a true saying
Viand—food
Vulgar—belonging to the common people

W

Waved—wavered
Wealsman—statesman
Weal—prosperity
Waged—paid wages
Weed—robe
Wot—know
Wreak—revenge
Worn—wasted
Wrack'd—brought to wreck

Y

Yield—grant ; confirm
You'st—thou shalt.

Appendix II

Classical allusions and proper Names

Alexander. He was son of Philip, king of Macedon. He was born in 356 B. C. and died in 323 B. C. His ambition was to conquer the whole world.

Amazons. They were brave women soldiers and were supposed to be the daughters of the Theban gods.

Antium. It was a town situated to the south of Corioli.

Capitol. Actually the Capitol was a temple to Jupiter, situated on the Capitoline Hill. Shakespeare supposes that the Roman senate met at the Capitol.

Cato. He was born in 234 B. C. and was a strict and just ruler. He was also a competent aud courageous soldier.

Corioli. It was a town, belonging to the Volsces. Marcius captured it in 492 B. C. and was awarded the title : Coriolanus.

Deucalion. He was king of Phthia in Thessaly. He and his wife, Pyrrha, were the only persons saved in the flood, sent by Zeus.

Diana. She is the goddess of chastity and a patroness of virgins.

Forum. It consisted of a number of buildings round an open space in Rome. Shakespeare uses the term for the market-place.

Galen. He was a famous doctor who was born in 130 A. D. in Pergamum in Asia Minor.

Hector. He was the eldest son of Priam and Hecuba, king and queen of Troy. He was the most eminent of Trojan soldiers, who fought against the Greeks in the Trojan War. He was killed by Achilies, the Greek hero.

Hecuba. She was wife of Priam and mother of Hector.

Hercules. He was a legendary Greek hero. He was son of Zeus and lived at Thebes. He performed twelve difficult tasks that were imposed on him by Eurystheus.

Hydra. It was a monster and had nine heads. It was killed by Hercules.

Ithaca. It was a small rocky island, ruled over by Ulysses. It was situated in the Ionian sea.

Jupiter. He is the president of Roman gods. He is also called Jove.

Juno. She is wife of Jupiter and the queen of heaven.

Mars. He is the Roman god of war.

Neptune. He is the Roman god of sea. He is a brother of Jupiter.

Olympus. It is a mountain on which the Greek gods live.

Penelope. She was the wife of Ulysses, king of Ithaca. During her husband's absence, she put off her suitors successfully. She is often referred to as the type of a faithful wife.

Phoebus. He is identified with the sun.

Pluto. He is the lord of the under-world

Publicola. He was elected Consul in 509 B.C. He played a leading role in expelling the Tarquins from Rome.

Tarquin. He was the last of the fabled kings of Rome. He made a war on Rome to regain his kingdom, but was repulsed.

Tarpeian Rock. It was a part of the Capitoline Hill, from where traitors were thrown down.

Tiber. It is the name of a river on the bank of which the city of Rome stands.

Triton. He is son of Poseidon. He lives in a golden palace at the bottom of sea. He blows a shell trumpet and possesses the power to pacify the ocean.

Ulysses. He was one of the chief heroes among the Greeks who participated in the Trojan War. He ruled over Ithaca. After the Trojan War was over, he wandered over the globe for ten years. He is also called Odysseus.

Appendix III

A Note on Shakespearian English

Shakespeare has his own way with the English language. His English differs in many important respects from modern usage. He takes all kinds of liberties with almost all parts of speech. Thus, he employs double negatives or double comparatives and superlatives for the sake of emphasis. Again, he sometimes uses nouns as verbs and *vice versa*. Quite often, he uses an adjective as an adverb. Similarly, many times, he omits the definite or the indefinite article.

In order to illustrate Shakespearian English, we give below a few examples from the play *Coriolanus* :

(A) The definite and the indefinite Articles

(*a*) *Shakespeare omits the article in the following lines* :

(*i*) Caius Marcius is chief enemy to the people.

(*ii*) I would they were in Tiber (*i. e.* in *the* Tiber).

(*iii*) Within this mile and half (*i. e.* a half).

(*b*) *Shakespeare uses the definite article in the following lines* :

(*i*) Of *the* which we being members.

(*ii*) Fame at *the* which he aims.

(B) Nouns

(*a*) *Shakespeare very often uses abstract nouns for concrete, e. g.*

(*a*) Our musty superfluity (*Superfluity*=superfluous numbers).

(*b*) What authority surfeits on (*Authority*=those in authority).

(*b*) *Sometimes he employs nouns as adjectives, e. g* :

(*i*) Within *Corioli* gates.

(*ii*) The *Virgin* voice.

(c) *Occasionally he uses nouns as verbs, e. g* :

(*i*) I'll *mountebank* their loves.

(*ii*) Still *cupboarding* the viand.
(*iii*) To *voice* him consul.

(*d*) *Often he employs irregular forms of nouns, e. g :*
(*i*) *Afric* for Africa.
(*ii*) *Mutiners* for mutineers.
(*iii*) *Provand* for provender.

(*e*) *Sometimes he coins compound nouns, e. g :*
(*i*) Harvest-man.
(*ii*) Orange-wife.
(*iii*) Apron-men.

(C) Adjectives

(*a*) *Shakespeare coins compound adjective, e. g :*
(*i*) Rank-scented.
(*ii*) Man-enter'd.
(*iii*) Many-headed.
(*iv*) Wind-shaken.

(*b*) *Shakespeare uses double comparatives for the sake of emphasis, e. g :*
(*i*) My reasons *more worthier* than their voices.
(*ii*) That's *lesser* than little.

(*c*) *He employs adjectives as adverbs, e. g :*
(*i*) Whom *late* you have named for consul (*Late*=lately).
(*ii*) *Wondrous* malicious (*Wondrous*=wonderfully).
(*iii*) Give it *bountiful* (*Bountiful*=bountifully).

(*d*) *He sometimes uses adjectives as nouns, e. g :*
(*i*) My *little* should be dieted (*Little*=little deeds).
(*ii*) If you'll bestow a *small* (Small=a small amount).

(*e*) *He employs unusual forms of adjectives, e. g :*
(*i*) *Un-active* (for inative).
(*ii*) *Ingrateful* (for ungrateful).
(*iii*) *Dishonour'd* (for dis-honourable).
(*iv*) *Deserved* (for deserving).
(*v*) *More strong* (for stronger).

(D) Verbs

(*a*) *He employs old forms of past participle, e. g* :

(*i*) They had *beat* you to your trenches. (*Beat*=beaten).

(*ii*) Have you *chose* this man. (*Chose*=chosen).

(*iii*) You have *holp* to make this rescue. (*Holp*=helped).

(*b*) *He omits verbs of motion, e. g* :

(*i*) I will not out of doors. (*i. e.* I will not *go* out of doors).

(*ii*) Shall's to the Capitol (*i. e.* shall us *go* to the Capitol).

(*c*) *He uses verbs as nouns, e. g.* :

(*i*) Neither foolish in our *stands* not cowardly in our *retire*.

(*d*) *He uses transitive verbs as intransitive ones, e. g.* :

(i) We *prove* this very hour.

(ii) He did not *curse* against the Volsces.

(*iii*) You shall *divide* in all with us.

(*e*) *He uses intransitive verbs as transitive ones, e. g.* :

(*i*) While she *chats* him.

(*ii*) Give me leave to *retire* myself.

(*iii*) *Arriving* a place of potency and sway.

(E) Prepositions

(*a*) *He uses 'on' instead of 'of', e. g.* :

(*i*) Worth six *on* him. (*On*=of).

(*ii*) To say the truth *On't*. (*On't*=of it).

(*iii*) No more talking *On't* (*On't*=of it).

(*b*) *He uses 'in' instead of 'into', e. g.* :

(*i*) Turn your current *in* a ditch (*In*=into).

(*ii*) They of Rome are entered *in* our counsels. (*In*=into).

(*c*) *He uses 'of' instead of 'by', e. g.* :

(*i*) Thought of every one (*Of*=by).

(*ii*) Who is *of* Rome worse hated than of you (*Of*= by).

(*d*) *He uses 'with' instead of 'by', e. g.* :

(*i*) Baited ***with*** one (***With***=by).

(*ii*) Not much missed but ***with*** his friends.

(*iii*) Accompanied ***with.***

(*c*) *He uses prepositions as adverbs, e. g.* :

(*i*) The gods doom him *after* (*After*=after-wards).

(*ii*) And, *after*, your loving motion towards the common body.

(*f*) *He uses 'to' instead of 'for', e. g.* :

This fellow had a Volscian *to* his mother (*To*=for).

(F) Pronouns

(*a*) *He uses personal pronouns reflexively, e. g.* :

(*i*) I'll renew *me* in his fall (*Me*=myself).

(*ii*) Ere we do repose *us* (*Us*=ourselves).

(*iii*) They do prank *them* in authority (*Them*=themselves).

(*iv*) Friends that thought *them* sure of you (*Them*= themselves).

(*b*) *He uses 'who' for 'whom,' e. g.* :

(*i*) *Who* does the wolf love (*Who*=whom).

(*ii*) *Who* ? my master (*Who*=whom).

(*c*) *He omits the pronoun where it is a subject ; e. g.* :

(*i*) Beseech you (*i. e.* I beseech you).

(*ii*) Has spoken like a traitor (*i. e.* he has spoken like a traitor).

(*iii*) *Has* such a confirmed countenance (*i. e.* he has such a confirmed countenance).

(*d*) *He uses 'Who' for 'Which' and vice-versa, e. g.* :

(*i*) Belly *who* is the sink o'the body (*Who*=which).

(*ii*) *Which* was sometimes his general (*Which*=who).

(*iii*) Where is that slave ***which*** told me (***Which***=who).

(G) Adverbs

(*a*) *He uses irregular forms of adverbs, e. g.* :

(*i*) *Once*, if he do require our voices. (*Once*=once for all).

(*ii*) How *youngly* he began to serve his country. (*Youngly*=at a young age).

(*ii*) *Briefly*, we heard their drums (*Briefly*=a short time ago).

(*b*) *He uses adverbs as adjectives, e. g.* :

(*i*) Our *then* dictator.

(*ii*) Following the fliers at the *very* heels.

(*c*) *He often transposes the adverb, e. g.*

(*i*) I also am longer to live most weary (*i. e.* to live longer).

(*ii*) To be partly proud (*i. e.* partly to be proud).

(*d*) *He sometimes employs unusual forms of comparative, e. g.*

(*i*) He bears himself more proudlier (*Proudlier*= more proudly).

(*ii*) I should freelier rejoice in that absence. (*Freelier*=more freely).

(H) Conjunctions

(*a*) *He uses 'an' instead of 'if', e. g.* :

(*i*) *An* he had stayed by him (*An*=if).

(*ii*) *An* 'twere to give again.

(*iii*) *An't* please you, deliver.

(*b*) *He uses 'for' instead of 'because,' e. g.* :

(*i*) *For* that I have not washed my nose. (*For*= because).

(*ii*) *For* I love thee, take this along.

(*c*) *He uses 'Or......or' instead of 'either......or', e. g.* :

(*i*) *Or* wrath or craft may get him.

(*ii*) *Or* let us stand to our authority, *or* let us lose it.

(*d*) *He uses 'that' for 'so that', e. g.* :

Beat thou the drum, *that* it speak mournfully.

(e) *He uses 'nor......nor' instead of 'neither......Nor', e. g.* :

(*i*) I'll *nor* sell *nor* give him.

(*ii*) *Nor* sleep *nor* sanctuary.

(*f*) *He omits 'that', e. g.* :

(*i*) Would all the rest were so (*i. e.* would *that* all the rest were so).

(*ii*) It may be you have heard it (*i. e.* it may be that you have heard it).

(*iii*) We might guess they relieved us humanely (*i. e.* we might guess that they relieved us humanely).